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# Twenty years of 'sonshine', and counting

JESSIE SCHUT

*Calgary's Sonshine Centre.*

**Jessie Schut**

CALGARY — When members of First Christian Reformed Church in Calgary made a commitment to initiate and support Sonshine Ministries Centre in 1978, they never imagined it would last 20 years.

Back then, they only knew that the city was experiencing an oil boom, and that all kinds of job-seekers were moving into the area. These people brought along with them the social problems often associated with a transient population: homelessness, lack of family support, and lawless behavior.

The congregation had recently experienced a spiritual revival and was eager to reach out with the gospel in word and deed. When the two apartment buildings adjacent to the church were put up for sale, the vision for Sonshine Ministries Centre was born.

Sonshine would provide emergency housing and counselling for people in need. With the full blessing of First CRC council, faith promises from its members and financial backing from several large supporters, an independent board purchased the two buildings.

Within a year, the building was filled with tenants in need of these services. A full time counsellor and director, Herman Vanderburg, was hired, who,

*See* **SONSHINE** *page 2...*

# *Egyptian Christians: persecuted or not?*

**Alan Doerksen**

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. — Recent stories telling of more than 1,200 Christians being arrested and tortured by police in a small town in southern Egypt have sparked a controversy between some Egyptians who claim that Christians are not being persecuted at all in Egypt and others who say Christians often suffer for their faith in Egypt.

A catalyst to this debate was a news story that appeared Oct. 25 in the British *Daily Telegraph* under the headline: "Egyptian police 'crucify' and rape Christians." The story reported that more than 1,200 Christians in the village of El-Kosheh were arrested and tortured in a police crackdown in mid-August, as police searched for the murderer of two people. According to the *Telegraph*'s electronic news service, "Witnesses reported beatings, rapes, torture by electric shock, and being nailed to crosses for short periods of time. Children and infants were beaten and girls raped in front of their families."

## Arrested after complaints

Coptic Bishop Anba Wissa, who works in the affected area, is quoted by online news service religiontoday as saying, "It was horrific — entire families were severely beaten and tortured, and some of the children will be scarred for life." After several fruitless complaints to local and regional authorities, Wissa notified Egyptian human rights agencies.

But since then, Wissa and two Coptic priests have been arrested and charged with interfering in the murder investigation, reports *Compass Direct News*.

After news of the alleged abuses at El-Kosheh became public, Egyptian police announced they had identified the alleged murderer, a Christian who was a cousin of one of the victims, says *Compass Direct*. On September 22, a public prosecutor filed murder charges against this suspect.

However, two prosecution witnesses who had testified against the alleged murderer went to the public prosecutor Oct. 7 and declared that their testimony had been given under torture and was not true. The prosecutor promptly ordered the witnesses, both Christians, put under arrest for giving false testimony.

A recent fact-finding mission from the Egyptian Organization of Human Rights (EOHR) showed that more than 1,200 Christians were detained by police, and that police "started from the premise that the perpetrator must be a Christian," reports *Compass Direct*.

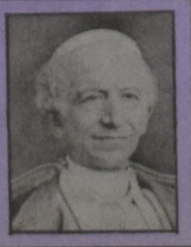
*See* **COPTIC** *page 3...*

**The Truth About Crucifying and Raping Christians in Egypt**

**The Sunday Telegraph Was Not There!**

*An Egyptian website expresses distaste toward the* Sunday Telegraph*'s version of events in southern Egypt.*

***What did Abe Kuyper and Pope Leo XIII have in common?*** ..... ***p. 10***



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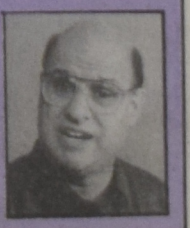

News

# Sonshine brings light into darkness of people's lives

... continued from page 1

along with his wife, Betty, served as a houseparent.

Although the centre had gotten off to a good start, nobody really knew what lay in the future. "When I was hired," says Vanderburg, "the board told me they could only give me a two year commitment. When we moved our family out here from Toronto, we were just going on faith."

Now as the centre celebrates 20 years of existence, supporters can look back and see that their faith in God was fully justified. God used, and continues to use, Sonshine to bring light into the darkness of people's lives.

In its first 10 years Sonshine housed a broad spectrum of people who needed a secure environment while trying to get their lives back on track: released prisoners, transient singles, men and women struggling with mental health problems, and women whose children were being returned to them after a period of custody by Child Welfare authorities.

Referrals came from social services, a short-term shelter for battered women, and counsellors. In a secure environment which offered weekly counselling and life-skills courses by

JESSIE SCHUT PHOTOS

*Sharee, a resident of the Sonshine Centre.*

Christian professionals, residents were given a second chance at life. The work, said Vanderburg, relied totally on the work of God in peoples' lives. While not all residents took advantage of the services, many did use the help offered.

"People have walked out of here saying things like, 'This place was useless, I'm glad to get out of here,'" says Tako Koning, in charge of fundraising. "But 10 years later, we would get a note from these same people thanking us for helping them."

Because the centre was becoming well-known, in 1985 it began receiving regular grants from Calgary's Social Services department, helping to strengthen the often precarious bottom line. Although other funding came from individuals and churches in the CRC community, First CRC continued to provide its core support.

## Focus on family

About 10 years ago, Sonshine Centre decided to concentrate its support and resources on the problem of family violence. Today it's known as Sonshine Community Services, incorporating the centre, a counselling service and family day homes that provide day care for children.

The 11 suites in the apartment accommodate women and children who are escaping abusive situations and need a safe place to recover and grow. The women, who pay regular rent, are offered a one-year stay that includes group and individual counselling, weekend emergency pager service and social activities.

Sharee, a 52-year old woman who has been in abusive relationships all her life, moved into one of Sonshine Centre's apartments this summer. Experiencing the centre's safety, warmth, and support has been a godsend for her, she says.

"Until I moved in here, I'd never truly felt safe one minute in my life," she said. "This is a wonderful place; I feel so safe here. It's the beginning of my true healing."

What makes the centre so wonderful, she says, is the love she feels. Today's society is so "hurried" and so focused on itself, that there's little sense of people caring for each other. Even though she'd received extensive therapy before her stay at Sonshine, she didn't have a lot of support.

"A lot of people in my life weren't healthy for me, so I had to let them go," she says of her previous lifestyle. "But here, there's support — a lot of support, with a meeting once a week, group meetings, individual counselling and most of all, there's love here."

## Money from auctions and car dealers

It's that kind of testimony that keeps Board members and supporters committed to the cause of keeping Sonshine Community Services operating. Five years ago the city's funding was cut off, forcing the organization into a number of belt-tightening moves, as well as exploring alternative sources of money.

Closing the place was never an option, however, says Koning. He points out that there's never a vacancy at the centre, and that there's always a waiting list of people.

"In a way, you wish you could close Sonshine Centre — that would mean its services are no longer needed," he says. Instead, the board has broadened its appeal to get money from other denominations and from the corporate sector. This spring, a celebrity auction of goods and services was successful both financially and as a public relations tool. Last Christmas, a group of car dealers holding a Christmas promotion selected Sonshine Community Services to receive part of the proceeds, resulting in a $17,000 infusion to the budget.

Looking at such totally unexpected gifts reinforces Koning's assertion that the Lord is faithful. "It started out as a grassroots ministry that nobody expected to last as long as it did," he says. "Now the message is out there in the community: Sonshine is a good place. And that's a good news story. The Lord has blessed us."

# *Life comes full circle for first directors of Sonshine*

**Jessie Schut**

CALGARY — When Herman Vanderburg was interviewed in 1978 for the position of counsellor and director at Sonshine Ministries Centre, someone asked him, "Are you prepared to burn your bridges behind you? You can't leave one foot in Ontario [where he and his family were living], and have one foot here in Calgary."

Vanderburg reassured the board that he and his family were ready to make a clean break. Nobody realized how close to home the burning image would come.

The moving van which was carrying all the Vanderburg's earthly goods from Toronto to Calgary burned up in Saskatchewan. When Herman and Betty and their six children arrived at their new home they had a lot in common with the residents they'd be serving: they were practically destitute.

"It was a disaster," recalls Vanderburg. "The devil meant it for harm, but God turned it into good. It pulled First Church together behind the ministry as they reached out to our needs, and it brought us down to the level of the people whom we were serving.

"When they met us, they saw that we were sitting on borrowed lawn chairs in our living room. Some of these people only had a garbage bag of belongings, and they realized we didn't have anything either."

For 13 years the Vanderburgs served Sonshine Centre, and it occupied a huge part of their hearts and lives. Herman offered counselling and directed the operations of the centre, but more than that, the centre's social organization overlapped the family's life.

"We'd have residents ask if they could come over to our place and stay in the kitchen at supper time so they could see what a real family lives like," recalls Herman. The family lived across from the centre and beside First CRC in the former parsonage; the home, church and centre formed a community. At Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving the Vanderburg's home was open for family-style dinners, while their living room hosted many celebrations for special events in residents' lives.

*Herman and Betty Vandenburg*

In the meantime, Betty had gone back to school to get her own counselling degree.

"It was an intense life," says Vanderburg. "Something could happen at two in the morning, and we'd have to be there. We came to a point that we needed a break."

In 1991, the couple left the Sonshine Centre for a new job back in Ontario, at Zion CRC in Oshawa. Not only did they leave the community that had taken such a great part of their lives, but they also became empty-nesters when the four children left at home decided to stay in Calgary.

Now semi-retired, this fall they moved back to Calgary, but this time they didn't need to burn bridges. They've come back to a place where they'll be surrounded by their children, all six of whom live in Calgary. Betty has accepted a contract position to counsel at Sonshine, and Herman will do the same in January. They're also planning to conduct workshops, lead marriage retreats and teach parenting courses.

Looking at Sonshine's 20-year record, Herman reflects, "We had the privilege of being the first directors at Sonshine. We learned to live on faith, and we learned that from month to month, from year to year, the Lord always took care of us. I know one thing for sure now: the Lord has a soft spot for people who are suffering."

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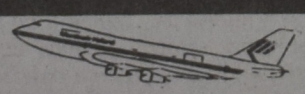

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News

# Coptic Christians 'persecuted all the time'

... *continued from page 1*

But a recent full-page ad in the Globe and Mail claims that Egypt's Coptic Christians are not being discriminated against. The ad, signed by several prominent Egyptian Christians, states in part: "The Christians of Egypt denounce the continuous attempts of hostile dark forces that play on the religious sentiments of foreign communities outside Egypt. These attempts are targeted to spread false claims of persecution against Copts in Egypt, while in reality Copts practice their religion freely in Egypt.... Copts and Muslims are very friendly towards one another, and are completely integrated socially."

The ad refers to a website which sharply criticizes the *Daily Telegraph* story and denies that Coptic Christians are persecuted in Egypt. On the website is a story by Abdel Gawwad Ali, which states that an Egyptian government committee "affirmed that no citizen in Egypt is subjected to torture or persecution, nor is anybody detained in prison outside the frame of law.... The articles of the Egyptian constitution guarantee full equality between all citizens in rights and duties, without discrimination on the basis of religion, sex or belief."

Ali quotes the committee as saying, "Religious differences in Egypt have never been a liability nor a cause for strife."

Elsewhere on the website is a report which claims that in El-Kosheh, the police arrested only 25 citizens, 17 of whom were Christians. "Due to its methods and procedures which are characterized sometimes by certain abuses, the police succeeded to arrest the author of the crime, who made a complete confession."

### Exaggerated charges?

In direct contrast to the *Compass Direct* report cited above, the website quotes the fact-finding report of the Egyptian Organization of Human Rights (EOHR) as stating: "the mission concluded that no irregularity or abuse was committed on a large scale against the rights of the Copts for religious reasons. But the organization registered that what was described as abuses from the security forces could be considered as part of a 'mechanism of work' of the security forces ... during any investigation."

The website dismisses Bishop Wissa's charges of persecution, saying, "Bishop Wissa contacted the foreign media ... and to attract its attention, he exaggerated, as normal, and represented what happened as religious persecution against Christians."

Commenting on the events in Egypt, Klaas Brobbel, executive director of Voice of the Martyrs (VOM), says he believes something happened in El-Kosheh, because reports have been widespread about the incidents. But he says the *Telegraph* story "seems highly exaggerated as far as numbers are concerned."

Brobbel asserts that the website's claim that Christians in Egypt are not persecuted "is an absolute falsehood. Christians are being persecuted all the time." But he explains that Coptic Christians "have to walk a fine line. They don't speak out much at all."

### Best to pray

Glenn Penner, VOM's development director, adds the leaders of the Coptic Church "don't make a lot of noise and get irritated at those who do.... Publicly, the Coptic Church will never talk about persecution, but privately they will."

"Any persecution carried out [against Christians] is done by Muslims," Brobbel contends. But he says the Egyptian government is not responsible. Local police forces may be responsible for such persecution.

Penner agrees that "Egyptian police treat people really bad." Asked about Bishop Wissa's credibility, Penner says, "I'm hearing that Wissa is a bit of a radical. He's seen as a bit of a dissident."

Penner's advice for Christians concerned with the safety of Coptic Christians is: "the best thing people can do is pray." Coptic Christians do not want people to write letters to the Egyptian government, he cautioned.

Paul Johnson, Canadian director of Open Doors with Brother Andrew, agrees that Egyptian Christians continue to be persecuted, and adds that Egyptian police sometimes give Christians "trumped-up charges" because of their faith.

Amnesty International has reported numerous incidents of Coptic Christians being killed because of their faith over the past few years. John Tackaberry, spokesperson for Amnesty's Canadian office, suggests Christians concerned about the situation join Amnesty's religious network, which monitors human rights abuses of people because of their beliefs.

# *Gay 'marriages,' legal suicide lose; gambling wins in U.S. state elections*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (religiontoday.com) — In the nation-wide election held in the U.S. on November 3, voters in Hawaii and Alaska decisively rejected same-sex marriage. Their votes were among 235 statewide ballot questions in a number of states across the country.

Hawaiians amended their state constitution. The vote, by more than a 2-1 margin, allows the legislature to restrict marriage to one man and one woman only, the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* reported.

Hawaii's Supreme Court is still expected to rule later this year on same-sex marriage. Activists on both sides of the issues say the court is likely to follow the public's lead. About 72 per cent of Hawaiian voters oppose same-sex marriage, polls show.

Meanwhile, Alaskan voters added a ban on same-sex marriages to the state constitution. Voters approved Proposition 2 by a 2-1 margin, amending the Declaration of Rights section of the state constitution to say that only marriages between one man and one woman are valid, the *Anchorage Daily News* said. The vote ratifies a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage which was approved May 12 by Alaska legislators.

If the same-sex marriage propositions had passed, they would have extended various social benefits to those in such relationships, would have made adopting children easier, and would have required the development of educational curricula which would present homosexual relationships as healthy, normal alternatives to heterosexual marriage, said critics.

### Still a volatile issue

The same-sex marriage issue is still being contested in several other courts. In addition to federal court challenges to traditional marriage in Alaska and Hawaii, the Vermont Supreme Court will hear arguments on the issue any day now; a lower court in Vermont has rejected an attempt to alter the state constitution to permit same-sex marriage.

Christian activists say they are mounting campaigns to fight every judicial challenge to traditional marriage. They are urging the 21 states that do not have laws against same-sex marriage to pass statutes, called "Defense of Marriage Acts," or constitutional amendments limiting marriage to a man and a woman.

"God made us male and female, and he designed us to live together in the institution of marriage," Alan Sears, Alliance Defense Fund president, said. "No society has ever redefined marriage. This is hardly the moment for America to go this way."

### No to assisted suicide

In the same election, Michigan voters rejected physician-assisted suicide. A ballot measure would have allowed terminally ill patients to obtain a lethal prescription from a physician and to administer the drugs themselves. Advocates of assisted suicide had campaigned for years to legalize lethal prescriptions, and succeeded this year, with the help of Jack Kevorkian, in getting Proposal B on the ballot. The measure would have overturned a state law that took effect Sept. 1 banning physician-assisted suicide.

The Michigan law would have created "all kinds of problems," asserted Focus on the Family, led by Dr. James Dobson. Under Proposal B, family members are not required to be notified when a lethal prescription has been given, and no one oversees the patient after the medication is purchased.

The proposal would redefine family, recognizing a "significant other" as anyone with whom the patient had a monogamous relationship. Maine and Colorado also have considered legalizing physician-assisted suicide, but only Oregon accepts the practice.

### Mixed bag of bans and freedoms

Voters in Washington state defeated a ban on the late-term abortion procedure. They also voted to end all affirmative-action programs in state hiring, contracting, and higher education, becoming the second state, after California, to do so.

Colorado voters were faced with two abortion-related measures. They approved one requiring parental notification for minors seeking the procedure, but rejected a ban on partial-birth abortion.

Gambling proponents won in California and Missouri. Californians approved unrestricted expansion of casino gambling on Indian tribal lands. Proposition 5 allows any Indian tribe in the state to open casinos tax-free, with no restriction on size, gambling space, or number of slot machines. Tribes would be able to purchase non-tribal lands, even in the middle of major cities, for the purposes of opening more casinos. The initiative leaves regulation up to the tribes themselves, putting the state in an advisory role.

Missouri expanded its gambling laws. Voters approved gambling on "river-boat" casinos floating in artificial moats; gambling already is legal on the Mississippi and Missouri rivers.

Alabama voters approved the Alabama Religious Freedom Amendment, which bars the state from "burdening the freedom of religion unless the government demonstrates that it has a compelling reason to do so and that the interest is achieved by the least restrictive means."

Proponents of medical marijuana scored big victories. Voters in Alaska, Arizona, Nevada and Washington state approved various ballot measures on the issue, while the results from Oregon, Colorado, and Washington, D.C., were undecided, CNN reported.

Supporters of medical marijuana say smoking pot may help ease pain and nausea for some patients.

South Carolina voted to remove a 103-year-old ban on interracial marriage from its constitution. The ban was not actively enforced, so the vote was more symbolic than legal.

Editorial

# *How total is your depravity, my friend?*

"If we really believe in total depravity," a sister in the Lord said to me a few weeks ago, "we would have no reason ever to be offended again. If someone said to me, 'You're a liar!' I would have to say, 'That's right. I'm a liar. I'm incapable of telling the truth.' If someone called me a jerk, I would nod my head in agreement and answer: 'How well you know me.'"

We both laughed at the absurdity of being so agreeable when someone insults us, but we felt that the argument seemed well grounded theologically, at least.

Not that we could boast of having reached that high plateau of humility and self-knowledge nor that we could recall many instances of having agreed magnanimously with our accusers that we were deserving of their contempt. Usually our defences are as easily aroused as the next person's. "What?! You call me a jerk? Why you miserable son of a missionary!"

And before you know it, we are convinced that total depravity more accurately describes the other person than ourselves. We're not perfect, of course (such an easy admission to make in a world where perfection is neither possible nor desired by most people), but we're a whole lot better than most people we know. And we certainly are not guilty of that specific offense just mentioned by this lesser creature confronting us. We are comfortable with the generic classification of being a sinner; but we resent being told about a specific sin. Figure that one out!

## Are Christians depraved?

Apart from the fact that a full acknowledgement of sins can be disarming (sometimes you completely baffle the accuser when you correct him or her and say, "Actually I did not interrupt you three times. It was five times"), the question still lingers in my mind whether our belief in the doctrine of total depravity should automatically lead us to agree with any charges levelled against us. At one level, I liked what the sister had said, but I also suspected that there was more to it.

First of all, whenever the Bible speaks of depravity, it usually does so in the context of describing people who reject God and give themselves over to a life of wickedness. I have checked the well-known texts in the Bible that speak eloquently of our fallen condition to confirm that.

For a fine list of derogatory comments about sinful human beings you can hardly improve on Romans 1: "They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful, they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless."

## Too much fun?

This list reminds me of a teacher I had in Holland in Grade 3, who loved to tell us what hell would be like: "It will be a place of pain, sorrow, grief, anguish, trial, vexation, tribulation, torture, calamity and despair." I don't know whether he had consulted a thesaurus as I did just now, but the list sounded somewhat like mine. Romans 1 is like that — almost as if the Apostle was having a bit too much fun.

But it is clear that Paul and others are talking about an extreme condition of corruption. Most people don't fall into this category.

Whenever the Confessions of the church speak about depravity, they describe our state outside of Christ. Lord's Day 3, Question 8 asks: "But are we so corrupt that we are totally unable to do any good and inclined toward all evil?" The answer is: "Yes, unless we are born again by the Spirit of God."

From this we may conclude that it is not proper for Christians to state unequivocally that they are totally depraved. In Christ they are new creatures and enabled to live holy lives: "These are holy hands; he's given us holy hands; he works through these hands, and so these hands are holy." The poetry in this praise song ain't much, but the sentiment is good.

## A communal response

So what do we do with the doctrine of total depravity? It's too radical to suggest that we rip off one of the five petals of that Calvinian flower called T.U.L.I.P. It's the first petal in this acronym, for Calvin's sake! Actually, I emailed a question to a few Reformed stalwarts I know. "Do you think the concept of total depravity is a useful concept?" I asked. "If so, how? If not, why not?" These are some of the answers I got:

**From G.V.:** Total depravity does not mean that people are as bad as they could be. It *does* mean that all dimensions of life are infected by sin. There are no "sin-free" zones, no areas that provide beach-heads for "redemption." Positively, there is but one beach-head for redemption: the ugliness of the cross. The mental full stop inserted after the "Yes" in answer to the question in the Heidelberg Catechism: "Are we then prone to ... all manner of evil..?" needs to be supplemented as follows: "No, because we are born again."

With the above provisos, total depravity is not only useful but indispensable for underscoring the radical nature of God's grace.

**From G.D.:** As a recognition that nothing I can do merits salvation, the doctrine of total depravity reminds me that I am saved purely by the grace of God through Jesus. It also forces me to recognize that it is God who works through me to accomplish his will, so that I am amazed at times at how he has used me for good things. Is this useful knowledge? You bet! I can rest assured that in spite of my own weakness and failings it is God who perfects the work he has begun in me. It's okay to be me, for God loves me and uses me, warts and all.

**From P.S.:** "Total depravity" sounds like "complete badness," rather than what I understand it to mean: all of creation is pervasively tainted by sin. I tend to think the concept of "common grace" was inaugurated to remind us that nothing created by God is "totally evil." But this term seems to have caused as many problems as it solved.

By emphasizing depravity more than grace, we become shame-filled and pessimistic people. By emphasizing grace over brokenness, we become complacent and self-assured.

The concept of "fall" is much more helpful as it places the same idea in the context of the biblical story. This moves us from the language problems of propositional doctrines to the biblical narrative itself. "Fall," assumes a good creation and anticipates an on-going and inevitable redemption. The tragedy of the fall cannot be explained without reference to the happy beginning and a glorious end.

## A blameless life

Those were the responses I got. This editorial has taken on a richer texture with a little help from my friends.

Coming back to the sister's comment earlier in this editorial: there will be times when I deserve to be called a jerk, and I hope that at such times I will have the grace to admit to my "jerkness" as the infection of the virus called "total depravity" catches me off guard.

But I will not automatically accept that designation, nor will I consider myself totally depraved, especially not when I know that God is at work in me, lifting me out of this fallen condition.

How else can we read Psalm 26 as if it speaks about us: "Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have led a blameless life; I have trusted in the Lord without wavering."

**BW**

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Letters

# Community, principles and thinking big

***Note: Even though we closed the discussion for now on the Hart/Wolters debate about Word and Spirit, these two letters seem to go beyond the discussion and suggest a certain approach useful to all discussions. Hence our decision to publish them.*** **Editor**

The Bolton Conference continued a longstanding debate between Hart and Wolters. The June '98 meeting was originally designed to reflect on the contribution of the Reformational tradition to North American culture. Regretfully, it developed into a debate between the two existing polarities in the larger Reformed community.

My reason for writing is to put the debate, and the various letters that have appeared in Christian Courier, into a different context. Many have already written in to Christian Courier with astute observations, but no one has yet stressed the importance of a constructive debate as a way of developing a healthy community.

All communities need to cherish various things in order to survive. Christian communities need symbols and rituals; they need traditions and worldviews. They also need concrete evidence of a living faith which actually practices all the virtues which the principles announce. The Reformed community has been strong on truth but not on dialogue about getting to truth. We need to learn the art of conversation and not so much proclamation.

The virtue which in my mind is critical to keeping a debate constructive is respect. Respect is a virtue which is two parts fairness and one part humility. We may disagree as to what God meant in a certain Bible passage, but if we respect each others abilities and gifts, then we will avoid using labels like un-Christian or non-biblical. Infallibility is a characteristic of the Bible, not of Christians or academics.

### Debate on which principles

It seems to me that the debate should be about which, not whether, constant or creational principles are relevant for today's Kingdom witness. This is vital to our Reformed identity. If we go spiritual on this fundamental issue, then we may as well pack our bags, because we will have sold our birthright. Let us think big and improve the tradition by polishing our own pearl.

God has given each part of the church different pearls. For example, the Salvation Army is really good at running soup kitchens; the Pentecostals are good at being missionaries; the Anglicans excel at rituals; and the Mennonites specialize in piety. God gives different gifts to different groups. All contribute to the Kingdom's coming in their own way.

Our Reformed/Presbyterian heritage excels at intellectual organizational and cultural witness. Rather than coveting other pearls, I suggest we celebrate our part of the vineyard as worthy of emulation for the next generation.

**Adrian Guldemond**
**Ancaster, Ont.**

# *The death of charity?*

The *Christian Courier* of November 6 announces the closure of the discussion between Hendrik Hart and Al Wolters concerning "timeless principles."

Unfortunately, that same issue contains a letter from Jacob Ellens, highlighted with a black border, claiming that Hart's views go beyond even those of the heretic Marcion. Such inflammatory charges hardly constitute closure and cannot pass without comment.

The nub of Hart's argument, as he has written it down for me, is that "in Christ the Holy Spirit restores God's children (guided by the Scriptures in the community of faith) to their responsible calling as God's co-workers." Only the most uncharitable spirit would conclude from this, as Ellens does, that Hart believes that the only fixed point for faith is his own "ability to infer what new things the Holy Spirit is attempting to teach us."

Most of the Hart-Wolters discussion was a serious, respectful exchange between two thoughtful persons who differ deeply about important issues. While I have disagreements with both Hart and Wolters, as president of ICS I stand behind such an exchange. This is the kind of discussion the Christian community should expect and welcome from its professors. I regret that Ellen's missive smothers a good effort with outrageous charges.

This tendency to accuse, polarize and condemn has all too often characterized interaction in the Reformed community. It is precisely this tendency which participants in the "Reformed Institutions" conference (where the Hart-Wolters discussion originated) were determined to overcome.

Perhaps the black border around Ellens's letter was a fitting symbol of the death of dignity and charity in this discussion.

**Harry Fernhout, President**
**Institute for Christian Studies**
**Toronto, Ont.**

**Poem**

# African proverb

*those who have teeth find no meat*
*those who have none have too much*

*I fed your son his first cheeseburger*
*I drove your wife to the country*
*to escape the pressure*
*of divorce proceedings*

*I bought your child electrolyte*
*allowing him to vomit on my shirt*
*while you expended your lasciviousness*
*on worthless women*

*you had a bride*
*who would have died in faithfulness*
*you traded it all for a manipulator*
*who will leave you*
*as your health fails*

*why does a man walk away*
*from what another pleads to God for*
*all his life*
*and cannot have?*

*Perhaps the day will come*
*when God will bring meat*
*to a man with teeth*

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Family

Marian den Boer

# A Friend Dies

*For me to live is Christ and to die is gain. If however, it is to be life in the flesh and I am to live on here, that means fruitful service for me; so I can say nothing as to my personal preference, but I am hard pressed between the two* (Philippians 1:21-23a).

Joan used to come to our house to cut the family's hair. She would charge $35 to do the whole family. Because I'm Dutch, I accepted this as a really good deal.

Now that Joan is gone, I regret not paying her more. Last time I saw her I told her we would double her wages when she got well. I really truly believed she would get well. She believed that too ... the only difference was she saw her complete healing from cancer happening when she got her new body in heaven.

I used to enjoy family haircut night. Every five weeks or so, my husband Marty would say, "It's about time we got our hair cut again isn't it?" Then I'd pick up the phone, dial Joan, and we'd yak for about 20 minutes.

We'd set aside an evening mutually agreeable to both of us, usually within the week depending on our schedules and promise to continue the conversation over haircuts. I don't think we ever had a haircut night where Jesus didn't show up in the conversation. He gave her the peace she had about her life and her death.

Each time, after suffering through a series of chemotherapy treatments Joan would show up in a hat (she had some pretty nifty hats), but then a few months down the road the hat would come off and her lovely red hair would be inching in, fuller than ever.

Our kids loved her too. She treated them with respect and was always interested in what they were doing. I think she liked it if I left the room to answer the door or put a little one to bed because it gave her a chance to connect with the person whose hair she was cutting.

I was sure it was her destiny to have a life-long ministry witnessing about the love of Jesus to anyone who would listen. I also know that during the five years she had cancer she did more witnessing than most of us do in a life-time. On November 3, 1998, at age 43 her human experience ended...and she has gained the glory of eternity.

Yet, her witnessing goes on in newspaper articles which have featured her; and in the spring there is a book, about dealing with cancer, coming out which includes extensive excerpts of interviews with Joan.

*Marian den Boer lives with her husband, Marty and six children in Hamilton, Ontario. They get their hair cut at a local shop now. It's not the same. But maybe it's their turn to witness to the hairdresser.*

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# Parents and teachers know best

(NC) — The 1998 Durex Global Sex Survey points to a distinct need for more sex education by parents and through school programming. Most teens view their parents as the best sources of sexual education despite the fact that they are not the most common source. At present only 14 per cent of 16-19 year olds cite their mothers as their primary source of information, while 24 per cent would prefer them to be. Friends (29 per cent), books (17 per cent) and sexual partners (17 per cent) are the leading sources of information, making it apparent that greater education and support for young people are required to help them resist peer group of partner pressure. The majority of the sample (98 per cent) was fully in favor of sex being taught at school. In Canada, almost half (49 per cent) of those surveyed believe sex education in schools should begin when students are between the ages of 10 and 12.

Book Review

# *The book of Job: more relevant today than ever*

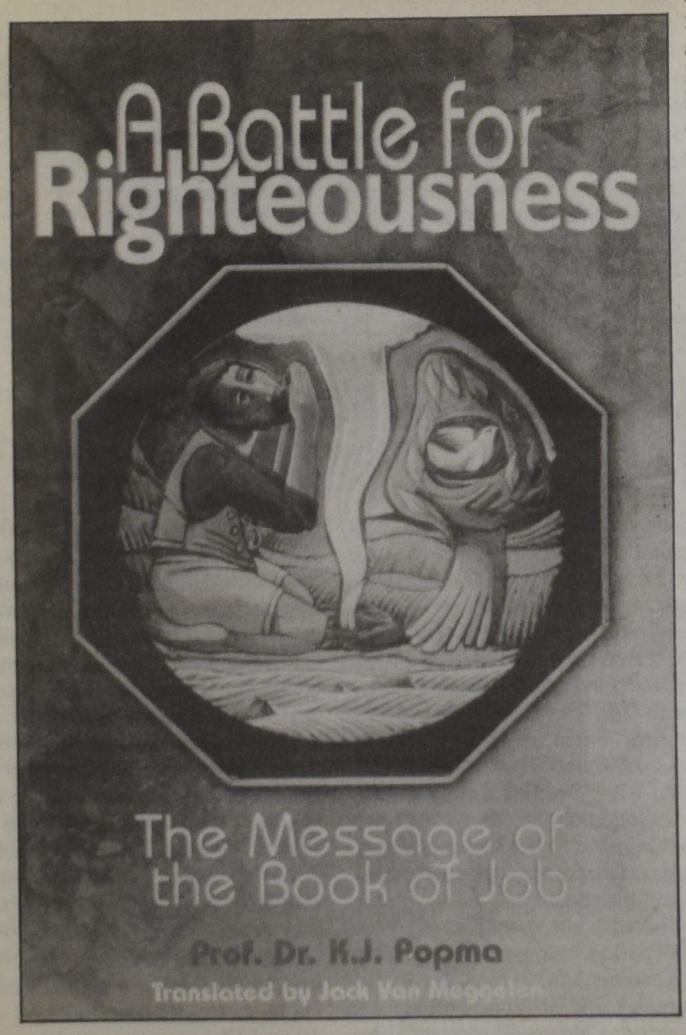
**Harry der Nederlanden**

## A Battle for Righteousness: The Message of the Book of Job

**By K.J. Popma, translated by Jack Van Meggelen.**

*Belleville, Ont.: Essence Publishing, 1998. ISBN 1-894169-34-4. 278 pp. $18.95 (Cdn), $14.95 (US). To order, contact a Christian bookstore or the translator at: 1-800-238-6376; e-mail: info@essence.on.ca*

I like this book very much. It is a guide to the book of Job that is fully committed to the truth and power of Scripture and that listens closely and reverently to what this amazing Bible book has to say to us. It is informed with much scholarship, but that scholarship does not intrude, or worse yet, subvert an obedient reading. It does not forcibly seek to make the book relevant for us in the way of much evangelical devotional commentary, but patiently discovers that relevance.




Few are better equipped to tackle this profound and puzzling Bible book than K.J. Popma, with his erudition, solidly committed scholarship and philosophical discernment. He does not leap to glib resolutions but allows complexities and mysteries to stand.

Popma warns us that the book of Job has been entrusted to the care of the church, but he wonders whether we have treated this book with proper care.

As we read Job, we too are drawn into this profound drama, and if we do not wrestle with it, we do not grow in wisdom. On the contrary, we languish in our own superficial wisdom. The book of Job, argues Popma, shows us dramatically that knowing God also means that we must know the limits of our knowledge.

That is a piece of wisdom, I think, that speaks powerfully to our time, which has come to recognize the arrogance of our scientific project rooted in the Enlightenment. Yet, insofar as we are postmodern, we are tempted to embrace a skepticism that is crippling rather than healing and rejuvenating.

### Animals the surprising key

Here the book of Job is, if anything, more relevant today than when Popma wrote his reflections 40 years ago. I'm not giving away anything when I say that Popma finds the key to the book of Job in the chapters about the animals. Most of us have seen films like *The Horse Whisperer* and *Jurassic Park*. They probably help us to understand how our knowledge of God can be deepened by considering these our fellow creatures.

We think to know the mind of God, to have great insight into his truth, his principles, his ethical demands for a pious life. But when we reflect on how opaque are the lives of even those creatures who live close to us, we begin to realize the enormity of our presumption.

Perhaps, too, here we have a clue to the fascination in our time expressed in these films. Disillusioned with the knowledge that science has given us and with its claim to make the world transparent to human understanding, people are again looking to other, more archaic kinds of knowledge.

Yes, Job still speaks with a unique eloquence, one that is not dimmed but deepened by the New Testament.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the fluent translation of a rich book by Jack Van Meggelen. It is a book that belongs in every church library and would be a Christmas gift that brings the Incarnation closer than all the lights and tinsel and gifts in the world.

# Popular sitcom bashes Catholics

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. — Fox TV's *Ally McBeal* bashes Catholics, a watchdog group says. The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights is complaining because episodes this year have featured a nun who has an affair and a priest who videotapes lurid confessions.

"Nuns are not supposed to have sex, except with other nuns," McBeal joked in one of the episodes, the Associated Press said. Later in the show the nun in question complains about her dismissal from the convent.

"A priest has sex with a boy, he gets transferred. At least my lover was of legal age," the character says.

The jokes are "insulting and very demeaning," Los Angeles priest Gregory Coiro says. He was a script consultant for *Nothing Sacred*, an ABC drama that also was criticized by the Catholic League.

"I can't imagine anyone getting away with saying this if it were any other religious group," Coiro said. Fox officials did not comment.

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# *Discipline in the church*

**Luis Palau**

What should the church do when a member turns to strong drink to avoid a personal problem? Turn the other way and hope nobody smells his breath?

What should the church do when a member is an incessant gossip, continually sowing discord? Do we retaliate and start gossiping about that person?

What should the church do when a member commits sexual immorality? Do we say, "It's complicated and it's none of our business. Besides, everyone is doing it these days and we didn't discipline so-and-so for doing it last year"?

The church must never forget that the Bible makes the church responsible for disciplining its members. Church discipline is not a pleasant subject. It is one of the least talked about subjects within the church. Many are afraid to discuss it. We would much rather talk about the "victorious Christian life."

But we cannot lead victorious Christian lives until we understand Christian discipline. The more we learn about what God teaches on this subject, the better equipped we will be to handle crises in our personal lives, our families, and our churches.

## A problem at Corinth

The New Testament church in Corinth lacked discipline. Paul discovered that the church hadn't properly dealt with sin in its midst. Specifically, we read in 1 Corinthians 5:1 that "there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife."

Here was a clear case of disobedience within the church, explicitly forbidden by Old Testament law (Leviticus 18:8), and a case that Paul says would disturb even the heathen. As shocking as this act of immorality was, Paul was even more shocked by the church's complacent attitude toward the sinner. Rather than being grieved by the sin, they were proud and arrogant (1 Corinthians 5:2, 4:18).

Paul was angry! These people were his converts and disciples, and therefore he proceeded to rebuke them. "Now gather the entire church and put this man out of your fellowship," he told them. "Send this man back to Satan's world. Don't allow him to pervert the purity of the church."

"But that's cruel," you say.

No, it was not cruel. It was done to humiliate the man and to point out his immorality, so that he could repent and be restored to the fellowship. Discipline is not carried out merely to punish, but to awaken people to their sin. It is not carried out in cruelty to destroy, but rather in love to produce conviction, sorrow, repentance, and restoration.

## Sin kills joy

God does not enjoy having to exercise discipline any more than you or I do. We worship a God who wants us to live in victory, and who desires that we be content even in the midst of mounting pressures and problems. Love, joy, and peace are the fruit of his Spirit.

Why, then, aren't his people filled with love, joy, and peace? Because of sin! Sin kills joy. Satan is the murderer of love, joy, and peace (John 8:44). And we are his slaves as long as we persist in making excuses for our sin, and in refusing to seek cleansing and restoration.

Disobedience leads to unhappiness! When a church steps away from the truth, when it compromises God's holy Scriptures, a wall of darkness surrounds the congregation. But when a church is obedient, there is love among the members, praises to God our Father, and a sense of happiness in the worship.

How would your church have handled the situation in 1 Corinthians 5? It's a difficult question, because few congregations know quite how to deal in a biblical way with public or known sin. As a result, usually no action is taken by the church against the sinner, and the outside observer labels the members of the church as "hypocrites."

Some churches, on the other hand, confuse threatening the sinner behind closed doors with lovingly disciplining him. This just further infuriates the person who needs to repent and seek restoration. He then changes his church membership (think of all the people you know who have played "musical chairs" with their church membership because of a problem that wasn't handled biblically), and everyone assumes the problem is settled. But it is not!

Discipline is a tough issue for a church to deal with correctly. It's unpleasant. Nonetheless, the Bible clearly teaches that the church is to discipline.

## Setting him free

I did something one day which until then I had never done. I put my arm around him and said, "Brother, you've repented; your sins are forgiven. Let me pray with you." And this broken, humble Guatemalan said, "Oh, thank you, thank you. Now I'm free!" With tears running down our faces, we hugged each other. He was so excited because he had been reassured by a fellow brother in Christ.

But this man should have been reassured earlier by his local church. When someone is obviously broken and repentant, the church must stand up and say, "In the name of the Lord Jesus, rejoice! He has forgiven you and we forgive you too." The assurance from such corporate forgiveness brings healing and joy to the entire congregation.

## Satan's message

Without this forgiveness, Satan whispers to the repentant person, "You're nothing to that church. They don't love you. Look how broken and miserable you are because of their discipline. You've confessed and asked to be forgiven, but they just want to crush you." Believe me, Satan does a fantastic job of coloring the story, for he is "the father of lies" (John 8:44).

Paul spoke of sorrow that is "godly" (2 Corinthians 7:10), but excessive despair is an opportunity for Satan to bury a person in guilt. Rather than see a man or woman destroyed by Satan, the body of Christ should realize its unique opportunity to build the person up and restore him! Love demands that we allow this person to be free from his haunting past. A free, disciplined and forgiven person can raise his head and confidently move on knowing that God does not remember a sin confessed — "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more" (Hebrews 20:17). This is the most exciting element of church discipline.

*Dr. Palau is an internationally respected evangelist who has spoken to more than 12 million people on six continents.*

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# CRWRC organizes second flight to Central America

BURLINGTON, Ont. (CRWRC) — A shipment of 18 metric tonnes of Voortman Cookies left CFB Trenton on November 14, destined for flood-ravaged El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras. Voortman's ran a special line of high protein/high energy cookies at its Burlington, Ont., plant.

The shipment will be the second such flight for CRWRC — Christian Reformed World Relief Committee — in as many weeks. The first Hercules airplane filled with food arrived in Nicaragua last weekend. In the meantime, CRWRC's overseas staff continue to buy local food to help the homeless and hungry.

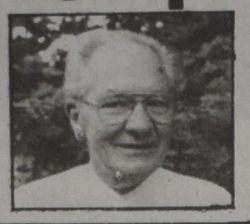
Jacob Kramer, CRWRC's Disaster Response Co-ordinator, has been working on a Central America response and has been in virtually constant contact with CRWRC field staff in Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador since Hurricane Mitch first hit. "Ground transportation in Honduras is improving and we are able to get to the outlying areas where the greatest needs are," he said.

In addition, a major shipment of food is being put together by Canadian Foodgrains Bank, of which CRWRC is one of several partners. They will also be shipping seeds by air. "Even though we are entering the dry season in Central America, we are trying to get new seed into the ground," Kramer said. He said the long-term needs of these countries — healthy crops — will serve as one of CRWRC's primary goals as it deals with the devastation in Central America.

CRWRC has pledged $200,000 to the Hurricane Mitch initiative and strongly encourages cash donations. When donations are used for Canadian Foodgrains Bank purchases, they will be matched four to one.

# When prophets are silent

## Chapter & Verse



Wayne Brouwer
● Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
Al Wolters

With many people of my age, I have war memories that are impossible to forget, and that could become obsessive. When I have seen a movie about World War II — most recently it was Spielberg's film *Saving Private Ryan* — war images and personal memories flood me for a week or so. And I tend to add to the stream by reading more books and finding more papers about World War II.

Sometimes I think that I could lay it all to rest if I could find an answer to this one disturbing question. How did it happen? How could 80 million people believe Adolf Hitler? How could hundreds of thousands of Christians accept this demonic man and his racial idolatry, even admire him, pray for him and die for him? I have often thought about that.

A Jewish professor, Ludwig Hirszfeld, has clearly stated what makes people murderers. It only takes a "slight displacement in the human soul," he said. "The future victim must be divested of all human attributes so that other characteristics can be imposed on him, characteristics of a revolting kind — those of a roach, a rat or a louse."

Hirszfeld was trapped in the Warsaw ghetto where he saw buses drive by filled with German travelling groups that were called "Strength through Joy." The tourists looked at the Jews as you or I would look at something in the zoo.

### Stripping of humanity

The Nazis managed to divest the Jews of human attributes — and not only the Jews. But I believe that our Allied friends, the "good guys," who burned up the population of Dresden with incendiary bombs, could do such a thing only because they did not see human beings (girls, boys, mothers, fathers) but despicable enemies.

There was a German engineer, Kurt Gerstein, one of the few members of a Christian opposition to Hitler, who joined the SS in order to expose the secrets of the extermination camps. He gave his eye-witness account to a Swedish diplomat, but when he attempted to report to the Papal Nuncio in Berlin, he was refused an audience. The historian Frederick V. Grunfeld writes, "Had he succeeded in his plan of stirring the Vatican into action, or indeed, had any of the major German churches taken a public stand against the killings, it is quite possible that the program would have been stopped. In a similar situation, when Nazi euthanasia teams had organized the "mercy killings" of some 70,000 "erbbiologisch Kranke" (i.e., mentally handicapped people), the project was abandoned after Cardinal Galen preached a sermon against the slaughter of the innocent" (*The Hitler File*, Bonanza Books 1979, p. 310).

### Joining the unprotesting masses

The prophets were silent. Except for a Bonhoeffer and a Niemoeller and a few others, the church had joined the masses.

God has told us that if we do not tell the wicked of their doom, he will hold us accountable for their blood (Eze. 3:18, 33:9, Acts 20:26). But there aren't many of us who raise their voices against popular opinion and political correctness. You might lose your head as John the Baptist did.

The message of the church must not only save the souls of the perishing but also condemn the contemporary injustice and intercede for today's oppressed. But when the God-appointed prophets are silent, they are co-responsible for the ways of the wicked.

*Andrew Kuyvenhoven was a teenager in the Netherlands during World War II. He lives in Grand Rapids, Mich.*

# *To shy to answer an altar call?*

## Now there are 'low-stress' alternatives

NORTH DALLAS, Texas (religiontoday.com) — Protestant churches are creating alternatives to altar calls, the tradition of professing faith in Christ or joining a church by going up in front of the congregation. Some shy people "would rather have a root canal than get up in front of others," pastor Doug Skinner of Northway Christian Church in North Dallas, Texas, told *The Dallas Morning News.*

Churches are retaining the altar call while offering "low-stress" options such as private conversations with the pastor in his office or home. This allows people to ask more questions and increase their confidence in their decision.

Pastors say they are looking for ways to remove cultural barriers. Many potential new members are coming from other faiths and are not familiar with the altar call, pastors say. Some parishioners do not like the change, saying it dilutes an important part of the service.

# Bible study soars in South America

SANTIAGO, Brazil (religiontoday.com) — More South Americans are studying the Bible. Community Bible Study International said it has established ministries in at least seven countries on the continent. It provides materials for eight- and 16-week Bible studies and trains Christians to hold classes in their homes.

About 15 CBSI leaders from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay attended the First South American Leaders Conference in Santiago, Brazil, last month.

"I found myself constantly praising God for the leaders," as they shared their vision for spreading the ministry in South America, CBSI executive director Paul Young said. The number of CBSI classes in Peru has increased from five to 35 since 1993, and 12 classes have started this year in Brazil.

# *British government strives to save marriage*

CC Staff

LONDON — With the rate of divorce at an all-time high and one-third of Britain's babies born to unwed mothers, the British government has launched a project that is rather daring for a Western democracy: an official program to strengthen marriage. In early November, the British Home Office announced an ambitious package of proposals to help people pick the right spouse and stay married once a family has been started, reports the *Toronto Star*.

The plan calls for the creation of a non-religious baptism ceremony, designed to instill a sense of parental responsibility in a country where hardly any young people go to church.

To make marriages stronger, the government wants to make the marriage process take longer. Proposed new laws would impose a mandatory 15-day waiting period between the issue of a marriage licence and the wedding. During this time, the couple could review a "marriage preparation pack and discuss long-range plans."

Such efforts at government-directed social engineering are standard operating procedure in some East Asian countries, which have the world's lowest rates on divorce and out-of-wedlock births. But in a Western nation that reveres privacy, these new ideas were controversial as soon as they were published.

This may explain why Home Secretary Jack Straw sounded defensive when he introduced the plan. "I'm not lecturing anybody," he said. "This is not about pressuring people into one kind of relationship or forcing them to stay together."

Census statistics demonstrate that the commitment to family has withered rapidly in contemporary Britain. About 40 per cent of marriages now end in divorce — about five times the divorce rate here 25 years ago. About 35 per cent of all live births are to single mothers, up from only eight per cent 25 years ago.

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# Kuyperians and Catholics discover each other

## *Both have a tradition of social theory*

**Harry der Nederlanden**

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — This year has seen at least three conferences celebrating the centennial of Abraham Kuyper's Stone Lectures on Calvinism as a world-and-life-view. Unique to the conference held at Calvin College on Reformation Day weekend was its pairing with Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical on the social question *Rerum Novarum*. The conference featured a strong list of speakers from both the Reformed and Catholic traditions.

Prominent among them: Archbishop Nguyen van Thuan, president of the Pope's advisors on issues of justice and peace, and a man who spent 13 years in prison for his faith; well-known Catholic theologian Avery Dulles; political theorist Michael Novak; historian at Wheaton College Mark Noll; and Chuck Colson.

Among the respondents, whose presentations were sometimes almost as extensive as those of the main speakers, were to CC readers: James Bratt, Nicholas Wolterstorff, Bob Goudzwaard, John Bolt, Sander Griffioen and David Koyzis, to pick only a sampling.

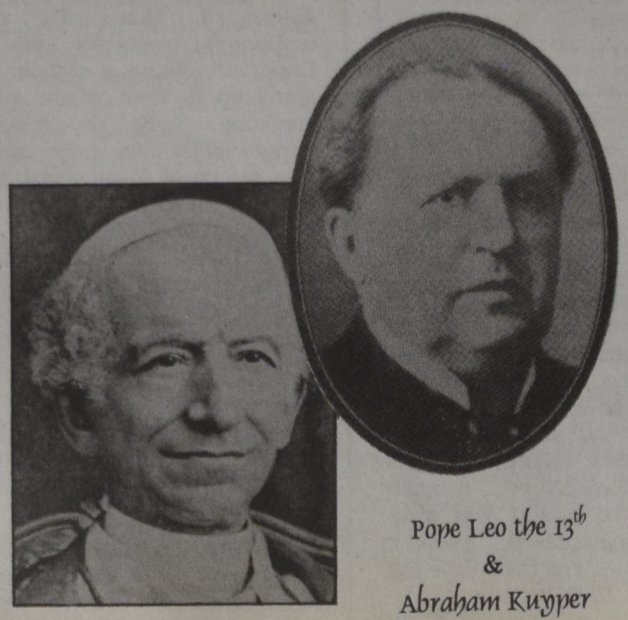
### Amazing similarities

Few of the speakers had ever compared Kuyper and Leo before, and all expressed astonishment and excitement at the great degree of convergence between their social teachings.

Both Kuyper and Leo called Christians into the political arena on behalf of the poor and powerless; they condemned an individualism that puts the weak at the mercy of the powerful.

But both warn against socialism and other forms of "statism." Both argued that the state's authority may not be encompassing, but that it is limited by virtue not only of its divine origin, so that only God is the source of all authority, but also by virtue of the fact that other institutions, such as church and family, derive their authority directly from God, not via the state. Several other points of convergence were touched on, as well as points of difference.

The conference organizers did not just invite speakers who might be expected to promote a



Pope Leo the 13th
&
Abraham Kuyper

"classical liberal" view of the state as severely limited in its competency, but also some who ascribe a more positive role to the state, such as James Bratt, Bob Goudzwaard and Nick Wolterstorff.

Peter Heslam, a curate of the Church of England and the per, described Kuyper against the intellectual background of his day as the prophet of a Third Way, that is, as an alternative to individualism and collectivism. His presentation was largely a celebration of Kuyper's contribution to Christian thinking, but he raised some questions regarding Kuyper's use of "sphere sovereignty."

Such social spheres as family and church, art and science, may be grounded in creation. But Kuyper also used the word sphere to distinguish Christian from humanist culture and institutions. Obviously, religious pluralism cannot be grounded in creation.

Another respondent distinguished between confessional pluralism and structural pluralism to denote the two directions of human cultural expression.

### The human element

Not all the speakers addressed themselves directly to analyzing the thought of either Leo or Kuyper. Michael Novak looked at the so-called Austrian School of economics to show that thinkers in this tradition have become convinced that it is necessary to figure in the human dimension into economics. Nick Wolterstorff raised the question whether Novak himself in his analysis of the conditions needed to create wealth didn't overstress economic virtues. In fact, he questioned whether the so-called entrepeneurial virtues of risk, realism, organization, leadership, etc. are really virtues serve some moral end. They can be exercised selfishly and destructively.

Goudzwaard pointed out that both Leo and Kuyper were concerned about the dissolution of the "natural bonds of Society" by the mechanical aspects of the free market economy and were looking for new organs to heal the impoverished social fabric. He argued that just as Leo and Kuyper sought for ways to protect the powerless from the harmful effects of capitalism, so we have a public duty to protect, e.g., nature and weaker cultures from global capitalism.

### Needing civil religion

Catholic theologian Avery Dulles traced a progression in Catholic social thought toward the recognition of the religious freedom and pluralism, even where it has the power to assert the interests of Catholicism.

Although religious pluralism must be recognized, Dulles argued, an extreme pluralism is lamentable and ultimately untenable. The effects of pluralism have been contained in America by the existence of "civil religion," a broad consensus on moral values.

But at some point a society must assert certain standards; it cannot be neutral, for example, with regard to slavery and euthanasia.

John Bolt pointed out that pluralism was not an end in itself with Kuyper either. Both Kuyper and Leo expressed "theocratic" impulses: Christian social and political action serves to turn people away from unbelief.

A couple of respondents questioned whether it is desirable or even possible to restore "civil religion," saying that the creation of a moral consensus is certainly not a function of government

Charles Colson brought the conference to a rousing conclusion in a talk that drew heavily from Kuyper's Stone lectures on Calvinism as a worldview. Many Christians, frustrated by their lack of impact on culture and society, are turning away from the public arena to escape into the church. This is like an army fleeing from the field of battle on the verge of victory, Colson said.

### Cultural envangelism

Contemporary secular culture, he argued, is coming to the realization that human autonomy and all its ideals from scientism to welfare state have come to nothing. At such a time, "cultural evangelism" and a political witness are powerful ways to point people to the true source of shalom.

At a time when the foundations of civil order are disintegrating it is vital for Christians to represent Christian faith not as an escape but as a worldview and as a way that can restore community.

The failure of the old gods is not a cause for despair, said Colson, following Pope John Paul II, but, on the contrary, a reason to see the next millennium as the "springtime of hope."

This conference was important simply for the fact that it brought together two strands of Christianity that do have a tradition of social theory — Kuyperians and Catholics. The discovery of a great area of agreement between two figures who gave direction to these two traditions 100 years ago was a pleasant bonus. The project was a success if for no other reason than that it will make Reformed thinkers pay closer attention to the Catholic tradition of social teaching, and vice versa.

## Institute promotes morals and fee enterprise

The Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty, which co-sponsored with Calvin Theological Seminary the Kuyper-Leo XIII Conference, is a non-denominational educational organization established in 1990 to promote "a free and virtuous society based on moral responsibility and economic liberty."

Its study centre, the Center for Economic Personalism, seeks to integrate "free-market economic theory with Christian social teaching and developing compassionate, responsible, ethical social policies that maximize freedom and opportunity for all members of society."

The institute is named after Lord Acton, best remembered for the adage "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Lord Acton (1834-1902), a famous historian and source of political wisdom, stressed the relation between faith and freedom in his writings and was a champion of limited government and of human liberty.

The institute's main spokesperson and one of its founders is Father Robert Sirico, a Roman Catholic priest well grounded in Catholic social thought going back, not just to Pope Leo XIII, but also to Thomas Aquinas. Much of the thinking of the institute seems to be deeply influenced by the work of another Catholic theorist, Michael Novak, author of, among many other works, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, especially by his notion of the three bases for a free society: limited, democratic government as its political system; free enterprise as its economic system; and a moral-cultural system rooted in Judeao-Christian values.

The Acton Institute runs an attractive and educational website at **www.acton.org**.

# Limiting the state: a flexible principle

**Harry der Nederlanden**

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — The "Legacy of Abraham Kuyper and Leo XIII" conference comes at a time when, under the influence of post-modern thought, many Christian thinkers are questioning the existence of so-called principles for Christian reflection and action.

Some central points of agreement that emerged from a study of Kuyper's writings and Pope Leo XIII's encyclicals were:

- that government authority is limited, vertically by the fact that it is derived from God and horizontally by its coexistence alongside other spheres whose authority also derives directly from God;
- that the state is not called to enforce true religion but freedom of religion;
- that the state is responsible for protecting the dignity of all individuals but especially of those unable to speak for themselves.

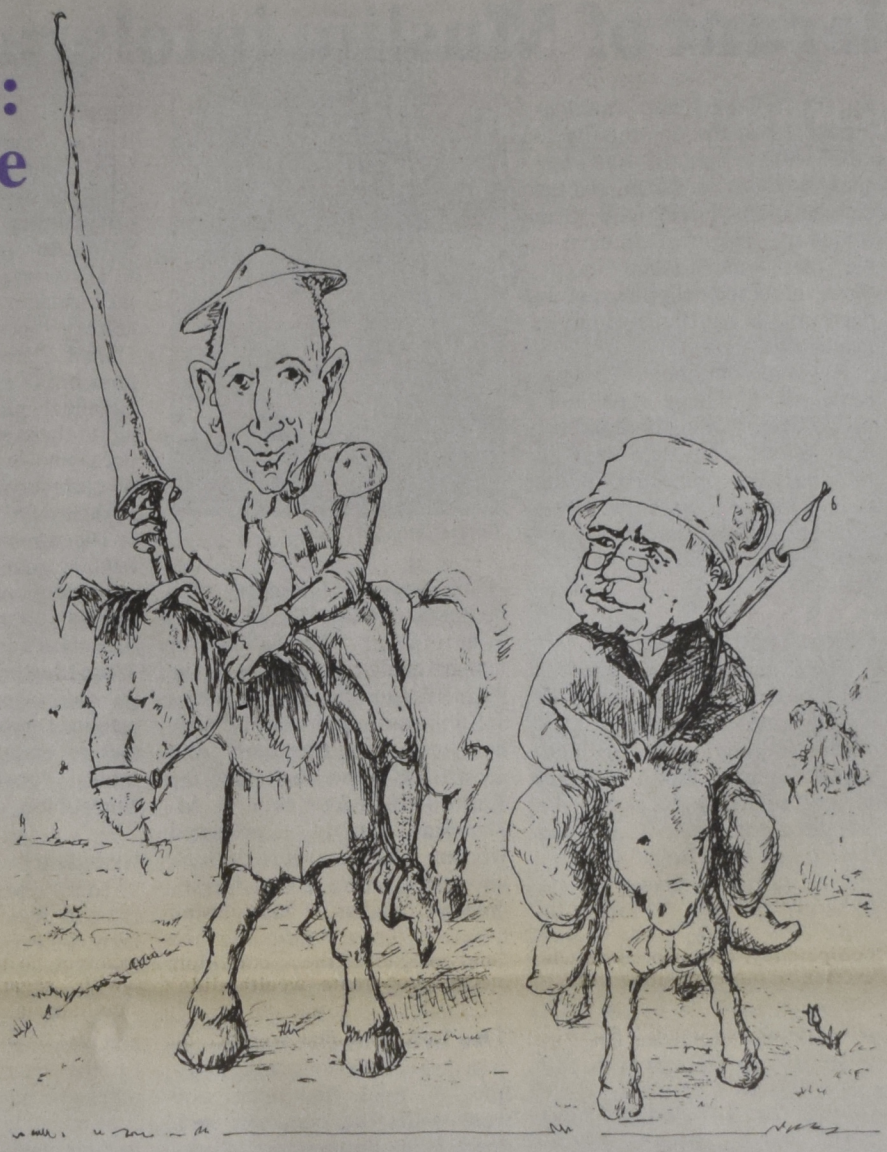
These are rather clear principles, and especially for the participants from the Acton Institute, they are articulations of the moral, rational order of the universe as created by God.

Those familiar with Kuyper will see that all these principles are part of that constellation known as "sphere sovereignty." Some of the Acton people were eager to show that these principles are also implicit in the Catholic tradition, and that both Kuyper and Leo were probably influenced by a certain branch of classical liberal thought that was anxious to delimit the authority of the state.

**Nearly everyone is agreed that the welfare state breeds dependence and mediocrity and saps initiative.**

Many conservative Christians are blaming the welfare state and liberalism (as state interventionism) for the lamentable state of contemporary society and morals. Sphere sovereignty and classical liberalism (the severely restricted state) offer a principial platform from which to attack the welfare state.

From this perspective, a great deal of our contemporary ills would be lifted if government simply admitted that it is beyond its authority and competence to minister directly to such things as poverty and inequality of opportunity. Nearly everyone is agreed that the welfare state breeds dependence and mediocrity and saps initiative.



*Now, Leo, before you go charging off again, let me tell you about sphere sovereignty.*

## Impenetrable boundary?

It is easy to see how the doctrinaire application of a good principle might result in pulling the present social safety net out from under those who need it most.

Those who defend this retraction of government to its divinely ordained limits do not do so because they don't care for the plight of the weak and the poor: on the contrary, they are sure that by doing so we are paying attention to the nature of the state as God has designed it, and this not only engenders more wealth but also greater opportunity for all, greater liberty and human virtue.

Everything depends in this schema on other agencies and organizations taking up the slack left by the government's withdrawal.

I'm not so sure that the principle of sphere sovereignty authorizes us to draw a hard and fast boundary delimiting the authority and competency of the state. Let me sketch a story.

When settlers moved into open areas of North America, they built their own bridges and ferries, dug their own wells and built their own outhouses.

Along with its churches and town halls, each community soon built its own schools, libraries and eventually hospitals. It takes no great amount of vision to see why, as people congregated in cities, outhouses and private wells had to give way to municipal water and sewer. People were beginning to pollute one another.

The ideal of greater equality of opportunity for all children led to the entry of government into education, and the increasing sophistication and expense of health care puts pressure on government to allocate these resources in such a way that the poor are not left out. A sense of government as a changing, historical institution whose boundaries are not permanently written in the heavens allows us to be more flexible.

This does not imply that there are no principles. We can still champion the principle of limited government under God as Kuyper and Leo did. But as Goudzwaard and others point out, neither Kuyper nor Leo asserted this principle for its own sake but out of deep concern for the plight of the poor and powerless, which at that time meant "the worker." Both men sought to create new organs in society that the worker might be helped and that he might help himself.

## No unions?

One of those organs was the labor union. Conservatives at the time strongly opposed the right of labor unions to exist because conservatives operated with a static view of society. A labor union did not fit into this arrangement and only threatened the fragmentation of society they argued. So the view of society as an organism which the state must protect led many Christian leaders in the 19th century to be suspicious of labor unions.

Leo and Kuyper, on the other hand, saw the ravages of industrialism and capitalism on the families of the worker as destructive of this organism, for the worker was largely deprived of its wealth and protection. Both leaders saw the labor union as an organ by which the worker might recover his dignity and become a full-fledged participant in the benefits of society, along with the aristocracy and the middle class.

Sphere sovereignty, just like any other principle, can become a harsh taskmaster. It has sometimes been applied as the sovereignty of the sphere, emphasizing the authority and competence of, say, the government or the employer over its domain. This is not its religious intent. The intention is to celebrate and open up every area of human endeavour to God's sovereignty and to his calling; to let his love and justice flow down on a broken humanity as a healing and reconciling balm.

**Sphere sovereignty, just like any other principle, can become a harsh taskmaster.**

## Freedom as blessing

This was stated in a different way at the conference by Avery Dulles, who pointed out that Christians cannot champion pluralism as an end in itself in the political realm, for extreme pluralism fosters relativism and the sense that there's nothing worth committing to. Can pluralism stand firm against slavery or euthanasia?

It is not ultimately our ideas and arrangements that are a guarantee of our liberty and of a just social order, but true service of God that extends to every dimension of our lives. It is God by his grace who metes out blessing; we cannot command it, not even by means of principled politics. Christian social activism is no substitute for personal piety, but personal piety is also no substitute for "political evangelism" (Mouw).

*Harry der Nederlanden is an avid reader and a keen participant in Christian thinking. He lives in St. Catharines, Ont.*

An American View

# Being intolerant of Muslim intolerance

**Tony Campolo**

Recently I was in London on a Sunday afternoon and made sure to visit the famous "Speaker's Corner" in Hyde Park. Perhaps you already know that on Sunday afternoons, Speaker's Corner is where scores of soap box preachers hawk off-beat ideologies and proclaim a host of way-out ideas. On any given Sunday, you can hear defenses of "flat-earth" theory, arguments in favor of anarchy, and claims that the world is already being governed by planetary aliens.

***"The atrocities propagated by Islamic governments make the oppression of Christians in China look like child's play by comparison."***

I am pleased to report that among the hucksters this particular afternoon, there was also an array of gospel preachers. New to the scene, however, was an array of Muslim preachers declaring the message of Islam to the milling crowd.

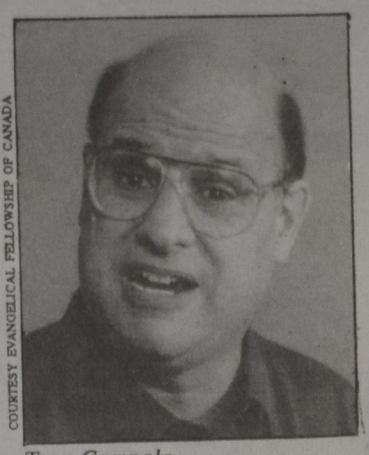
Later that same day I was in Trafalgar Square, where there was a huge Islam rally. Once again I heard speakers trying to evangelize the crowd into the Islamic way of life. At both the Speaker's Corner and Trafalgar Square I had the opportunity to talk with some of the key spokespersons for Islam, and the conversations I had with them scared me. They made it clear to me that where Islam reigns, those of other religions are in deep trouble and are likely to be persecuted.

Anybody out there who has some naive college sophomore in the family, who is mouthing that liberal clap-trap that all religions are connected to the same God and teach the same sublime values, ought to get their deceived kids to hear these guys.

## Others are infidels

The Koran leaves no room for the practice of separation of church and state. Instead, it teaches a religion of complete social control. In a Muslim society, rulers might permit the private practice of certain "religions of the Book" (as they refer to Christianity and Judaism), but are not about to allow for these and other religions to evangelize or to publicly propagate their beliefs.

Thus, it is not surprising that in Malaysia, Christians are put in jail for sharing their faith, and converts to Christianity are stripped of all property and wealth. Nor is it shocking to discover that in Saudi Arabia those who practise non-Islamic religions are regarded by the government as "infidels" who do not deserve basic civil rights.



COURTESY EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP OF CANADA

*Tony Campolo*

In Kuwait, the nation for which many Americans gave their lives to liberate, Christians are not allowed to exercise very basic religious freedoms. And most of us know that since the Kaliban has taken over in Afghanistan, highly educated women, who once were doctors, university professors and community leaders, have been forced to leave public life and have been locked up in their homes as virtual prisoners.

## The beam in their eye

In my discussions with Muslims, I could find none who were willing to condemn such oppression. Furthermore, I was shocked by the hypocrisy of these particular Muslims. They all demanded full religious freedom for themselves as they live in democratic societies, but would deny others these same religious freedoms should people of other religions go to live in Muslim societies.

There was more hypocrisy in the Muslim leaders of Sudan talking about how evil the United States government is in launching missile attacks on chemical plants in Khartoum, while these same leaders are the ones who ordered the massacre of close to a million Christians in their own country.

The atrocities propagated by Islamic governments makes the oppression of Christians in the People's Republic of China look like child's play by comparison. What Muslim regimes legitimate in their oppression of other religions makes what Christians had to endure under the communist governments of the Soviet bloc seem mild.

## Speak up

Today there are more Muslims in the United States than there are Presbyterians and Episcopalians, and most Americans do not know what to make of them. We hear them constantly complaining that they are cast by the press as terrorists and otherwise adversely stereotyped. And there is undoubtedly truth to their claim.

We do not want to be prejudiced, but if Muslims want to shatter such stereotypical images that we are developing for them, they must stand up and be willing to live by the religious tolerance the Constitution guarantees. They must call for an end of religious persecution by Islam. They must demand that their Muslim brothers and sisters in other countries grant to people of other religions, the same freedoms that they enjoy here in America.

Muslims are justified in their claims that U.S. policy in the Middle East has been too uncritical of the injustices of Israel against the Palestinian people. But do they not understand that our policies in the Middle East are partly the result of our fear of Muslims? The Koran teaches the same Golden Rule that the rest of us affirm. Is it not time for Muslim people here in the United States to tell their fellow believers around the world to treat others as they themselves want to be treated?

Until that happens, they should not be surprised if they are greeted with suspicion, and that we Christians regard Islam as a greater threat to our freedoms than communism ever was. The world is changing and the cry for religious freedom is getting louder. When will Islamic fundamentalists hear it and do what is right?

*Tony Campolo is professor of sociology at Eastern College and executive director of the Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education in St. Davids, Penn.*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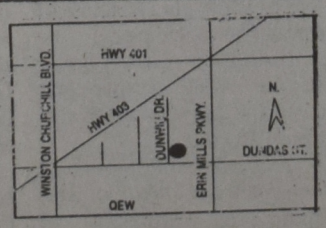


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Environment

# Meeting a modern prophet

John Wood

Do you ever feel like "pushing the social envelope" — trying something on impulse, when on longer reflection you might hesitate?

Sometimes we meet people only when we put ourselves in a situation of a little stress. I did that a few weeks back, and in the course of events met a prophet for our times.

The native man who confronted us that morning at the headwaters of the Adams River was polite, but firm. We would not be able to walk down the road to the trail head as we had done four years earlier. I had pushed forward with the group past a No Trespassing sign, looking for a reason for the change. But, now it was clear, this route had been closed to the public by the band office. An unsettled land dispute was the immediate reason. But the real reason was a fundamentally different way of looking at the world. Now, lack of respect for this view had finally boiled over in confrontation.

### A native view

What I heard that morning was a distinctly native view, a minority view. The story he told was full of angry words. He had been, it was clear, on the receiving end of harsh words and reckless actions by "your — that is, we white — people."

He gave me an account of Canadian history filled with a mixture of anger and judgment, yet remarkably also of genuine hope for reconciliation. But suffused over our conversation was the doubt that we both felt. Doubt that the dominant view will ever change. The majority of us in Western civilization seem to treasure a suffocating, mechanical view of nature as a mere prop for our activity. Nature, it seems, is just a puzzle to solve or a treasure trove to open for our immediate satisfaction.

"You people don't care about the land, the water or the creatures," he charged. "You no longer know the language of the earth because you have cut yourselves off."

### A view from space

John Glenn returned to earth this week from space. He is a hero of our times. Revisiting Earth's orbit after 30 years and now the oldest man in space, Glenn challenges us to do more than we think we can. The view from space has changed the way we see ourselves on planet Earth.

It is at once more hopeful and more inclusive. We are all part of a single planet, a "global village," as Marshall Macluhan called it. But the native view acknowledged that long ago. "[Thirty years ago] we took that picture of Earth from space and showed it to our elders. They looked a long time, and then said, Good, at last you have learned that the earth is one," the man told me.

Then, we celebrated this as a great, new discovery. But natives have known this instinctively, by great reflection and by communion with the earth. Although we celebrated this new view then, and are reminded of it again by Glenn's trip, have we changed our behavior? Or do we go into space simply to gain more leverage over the earth and its creatures. To merely benefit ourselves in a one-way exchange? I wonder.

### Time for a new view

Our view of nature is an old one. Scholars call it a Baconian notion, after the philosopher-scientist Francis Bacon. Philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff has noted that our view of life as mere "knowing" by empirical means must change. Pure reason will not hold society together in the postmodern age. Rather, we need a vision of society, he says, "in which persons of diverse traditions live together in justice and friendship, conversing with each other and slowly altering their traditions in response to their conversation."

I heard from one of those traditions that morning on the road. I don't agree with every point he made, but the central message was clear. The dominant culture is not listening very much. At every turn the natural world is being pressed back. We need to put ourselves in places where we can hear the voices of other stewards of the earth. I like to think of this as simply listening to the prophets of our time.

*John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College in Edmonton.*

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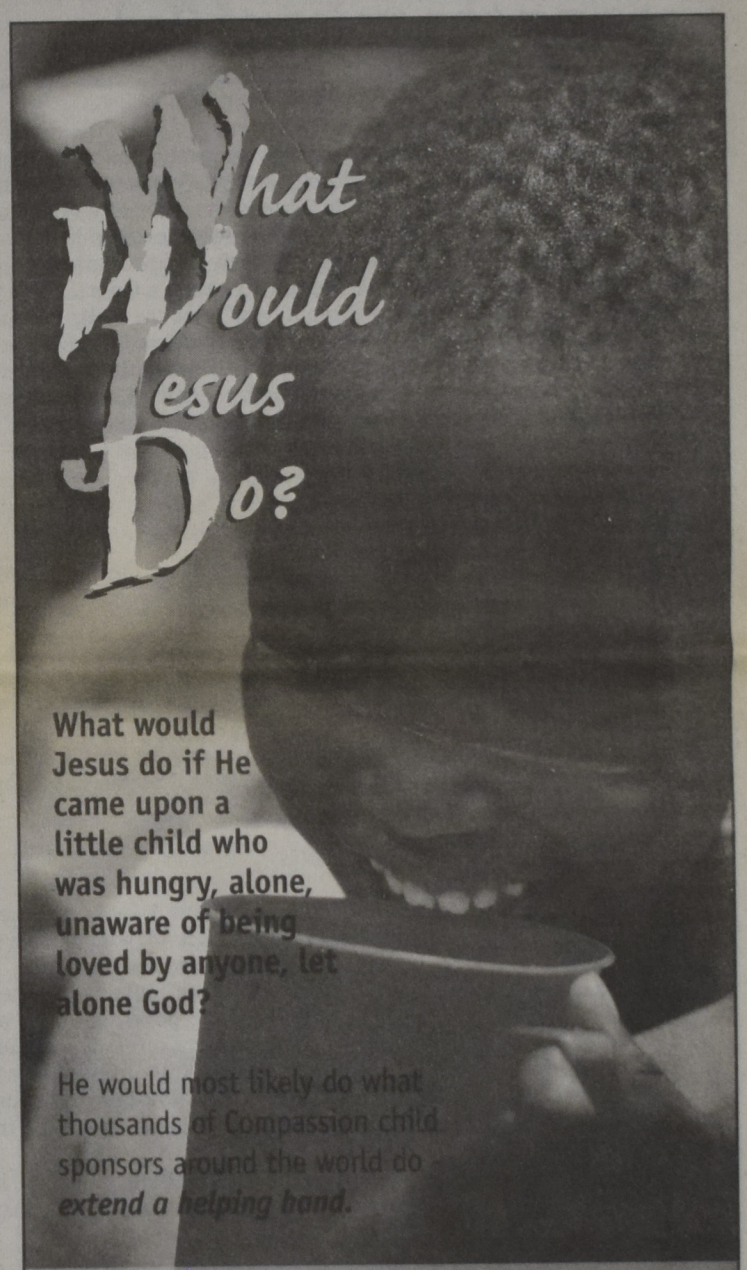
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Comment

## Two under 35

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# Hearing the voice of God

***Dear Elizabeth:***

I was in a Bible study with some students recently and two of the students in the group mentioned that they directly hear the voice of God in their heads. God speaks to them, to give them a Bible verse to share with a friend; or to give them a vision of something they should do; or even to help them make a decision about which they are struggling. They were surprised when the rest of us in the group reported that we did not hear such a voice.

We sing in the hymn "Serve a Risen Savior" that "he walks with me and he talks with me along life's narrow way," but do we understand that literally? For sure, I believe the Holy Spirit lives and breathes within us, and that we do have visions and even strong intuitions with regards to certain dilemmas we face, yet there is something about that "ever-present voice within" that concerns me.

⊠⊠⊠

***Dear Peter:***

It concerns me too. If somebody told me that he or she had a direct line to God, I'd wonder what drugs the person were on, or maybe recommend seeking professional help.

But the oddest thing happened to me this week. I woke up one morning with the words to the song "Those Who Wait Upon the Lord Shall Renew Their Strength." The tune was literally running circles through my brain. And I don't even like the song.

So explain that one, Peter. The truth is, it was just the song I needed to hear this week and it's creeping me out a little because it seems so obvious and so pointed.

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Wow! What a gift! You know, that's really how I look at these sorts of things — as gifts. They are not required evidence of your connection with God, but rather a note of assurance that God is connected with you.

What especially concerns me is that "The Voice" (their term) helps them make decisions in their everyday lives — to the point that they no longer need to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of an issue, consult friends and family, and then, in a moment of trust, make a responsible choice.

They seem to be abdicating the burden of decision-making to this voice. And while there are competing voices in their head, they say they "just know" which one is from God.

I suppose that it would be wrong for friends and family to challenge "The Voice." Who would want to disagree with God? It seems like an easy way to avoid any criticism of your decisions.

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Exactly! I mean, my little story is pretty harmless, after all. It didn't really affect my day; I got up and thought about it for a while and then went on as normal. There have been other times — a million of them — when I *do* have a decision to make and I would love it if God would let me in on what I should do, but that has never happened.

I've had friends who've married an obviously ill-suited partner because they were certain it was "God's will." Like you said: you can't argue with that kind of faith. You can hardly even discuss it.

But when the marriage breaks up, it really, really hurts, and you wonder if you should have tried harder to argue against "God" for the sake of your friend. Maybe it was even a matter of my own faith getting in the way, because I really wanted to believe that my friend was that in tune with the voice of God.

And maybe this is what I fear too: I begin to doubt my own faith because I don't hear the voice. You say your students were surprised the others in the group didn't hear such a voice. What were you personally thinking at that moment?

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On one hand, I felt a little sorry for these students — that they insisted that faith required constant supernatural connection to God rather than a more tenuous relationship of trust.

But on the other hand, I secretly doubted myself, wondering if I, somehow along the way, had missed out on something really special because my theology or faith tradition restricted me. I mean, we were studying the book of Amos, a man who certainly heard the voice of God pretty clearly. Maybe I'm not really a very spiritual person. Too academic. Too practical.

It gets you into this whole notion of two classes of Christians: those who have these special powers and those who, for whatever reason, missed out. And there's really nothing you can do to change the class you're in. It's not really up to you. You can't pray more, try harder to be good, or simply change your theology. I can't explain it.

⊠⊠⊠

The minute somebody says my faith isn't "right," I'm outa there. *I'm* allowed to doubt my faith, but nobody else can for me. That's a totally personal issue. I'm sure you agree, Peter. But what did you say to those students? Or did you just let it go?

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Well, it was a group setting. Some responded with affirmation, others with thinly disguised sarcasm. I asked them what is the most authoritative "voice" in their lives? What role does the Bible play in helping them make decisions; and so on?

They said that the Bible, for sure, was first guide in their lives, but sometimes they just needed something *more* for specific circumstances.

Then I said something about how I felt that God gave us freedom, freedom to find our own way in faith. Then someone mentioned God's sovereignty over all things, and, as with all Reformed Bible studies, we ended up with a discussion of predestination. :-)

It's a sensitive thing, though. It's a large part of their Christian identity. And as I said, it's an issue that gets me wondering....

⊠⊠⊠

I'm not sure how to finish this up, Peter. "Freedom to find our own way in faith" is so nicely alliterated it could be the first line in a rousing anthem.

But obviously this "supernatural connection to God" is very real to these students, and who are we to discredit that?

We come from a tradition that tends to be suspicious of anything that doesn't quite fit the orderly pattern we've arranged for our faith lives, so it might be quite healthy to take the leap and just accept it as a wonderful and amazing thing.

You know the grand tradition of fundraising we have? If we need to build a church or a school, before we actually begin to build we organize a committee and canvas for funds or hold rummage sales or arrange for a mortage. My youngest brother attended a Baptist grade school for a few years and this school was growing by leaps and bounds to the point where the kids were hanging from the rafters.

So one night the parents made the decision to go ahead and start building a new school on a plot of land at the edge of town, without any of the funds at hand. I remember the surprise my mother expressed that this group of Christians would move ahead on faith alone, confident that the money would come from somewhere.

Then she conceded with a shrug and a smile: "That's just the way they do things," and I think she was kind of impressed. I'm sure most of our stolid Christian Reformed business people would think it fiscally irresponsible to put that much trust in God. Probably a lot of us do.

***Yours in faith,***
***Elizabeth***

⊠⊠⊠

I serendipitously just got this quote sent to me via e-mail by a student today. Maybe it's God speaking to me (us)?:

*There is hardly ever a complete silence in our soul. God is whispering to us well-nigh incessantly. Whenever the sounds of the world die out in the soul, or sink low, then we hear these whisperings of God. He is always whispering to us, only we do not always hear, because of the noise, hurry, and distraction which life causes as it rushes on.* (Frederick W. Faber, 1814-1863)

***Waiting on Him,***
**Peter**

*Elizabeth Salomons is a freelance writer who lives in Vancouver. Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed Church's chaplain at Brock University. He's a member of Jubilee CRC in St. Catharines.*

# Two weeks that were

Bert Hielema

**AMERICAN POLITICS.** So unlike stuffy Canada's. Take their recent elections. In Minnesota they chose as state governor, a professional wrestler, Ventura by name, running under the Reform Party label. Perhaps Canada's own Preston Manning can learn the ropes from this man who spent a lot of time on the ropes.

For Newt Gingrich and other Republican leaders the election was an upsetting experience. Take the Southern states, always solidly with them, but not this time. Even there, in the Bible belt, the godless Democrats won. Why? The Republicans, trying to win favor with the Christian majority, condemned state lotteries which promised tax relief. The Christian public's response: "If virtue costs money, it costs too much." So they voted Democrat and for gambling and a tax break and indirectly for abortion. Hmmm.

And then there was the Monica mystery. The Gingrich crowd, with two distinct advantages, Monica and History, were confident that they could win five extra senate seats and more than 14 extra members in congress enough to assure Clinton's impeachment. Well we know what happened: the President's party prospered because demonic Monica had herself transformed into Santa Monica, causing not Clinton's downfall but Newt's.

**BACK TO GOOD OLD** Canada where all politicians are saints and where the *National Post* made its debut. So far I have seen two issues and, as a newspaper connoisseur, am pleasantly surprised. (The month of November we spent in North Carolina).

I — not the owners, of course — love the lack of advertising which leaves lots of room for editorial content: good value at half the price of the *Globe*, at least where I live.

Of course I can see Conrad Black's influence in the choice of staff: the editor of the *Financial Post* — now an insert in the paper — is Terence Corcoran, formerly a columnist in the Globe's *Report on Business*. Good riddance. What Eric Schundel is to the Jewish Holocaust, Corcoran is to the earth's Holocaust, denying the existence of global warming, the harmful effects of the disappearing ozone layer and blind to any environmental exploitation.

Another deserter from the *Globe and Mail* is Andrew Coyne, equally known for his very rightist views. I also noticed a column by David Frum, son of famous Barbara, whose life-goal seems to be to unite the PC with Reform for a common front against the forever-in-power Liberals.

Well, I don't mind to spend the occasional 50 cents to read what the Right has to offer, however wrong they sometimes are. After all, I owe almost all my knowledge not to those with whom I agree but to those with whom I differ.

**AT MY AGE** — this sounds awful — I don't get excited too easily: not good for my health, which I like to preserve as long as possible. I am keenly aware that the better I treat my body and brain, the better also my quality of life.

Here in Raleigh, NC, I noticed in the local newspaper a report on Jimmy Carter's new book. This former US president was forcibly retired at the age of 54 and when he learned that old age really does not start until 73 — this means that I am still in my middle age! — became a mountain climber, still writes books and poetry, serves as Sunday School teacher and in general devotes his life to projects such as Habitat for Humanity. I once heard him at a conference in Atlanta Georgia, where he was introduced as a person who used the US presidency as a stepping stone to his real love: helping to improve the lot of the poor.

I was shocked to learn from him that the average 65-year-old watches 43 hours TV per week. Television kills brain cells and speeds up Alzheimer's. Wisdom sometimes flowers in our later years, but brainpower starts to dim in middle age; diet and living habits can speed up that process. What we eat affects our health in the long run, but the link between food and brain function is immediate.

**THERE IS A DIRECT** connection between no breakfast and dullness of mind. Our first food restocks dwindling glucose stores which are the brain's only source of fuel. Therefore that meal should be light, mostly carbohydrates and thus such things as shredded wheat with a banana and nonfat milk, or oatmeal and some wheat germ and orange juice.

Older people need nutrients rich in vitamin C and E and beta carotene which prevent premature aging of the brain and nervous systems. Also good brain foods are carrots, sweet potatoes, spinach, apricots, broccoli.

Needed for clear thinking are such minerals as iron, boron and zinc, while lack of any vitamin B can impair thinking, concentration, memory and reaction time. You find these in yogurt, wheat germ and green peas, just to name a few.

All this is useless without exercise which stimulates the bloodflow to keep a person thinking clearly and promotes good health. The Romans already had a saying, *Mens Sana in Corpore Sano* (a sound mind in a sound body).

**REMEMBER THAT I** have written about the Millennium bug. About 13 months to go and the closer we come to the year 2000 the higher the remedy costs, now already $850 billion US and climbing, as companies and governments discover that the problems are much more complicated.

If you have investments, it'd be smart to minimize stock holding and until well into the year 2000 have your portfolio in a combination of cash, bonds and perhaps gold. Although North American banks are probably well prepared, not one of the 79 surviving Japanese banks are ready.

Canadian Y2K (Year 2 Thousand) expert Peter De Jager believes that the market will fall significantly from its 1998 highs because the uncertainty alone is enough to make the stock market drop. It is safe to predict that January 2000 will be chaos for the economy and financial market. Nobody knows what will happen, so prepare for the worst: buy extra non perishable food. Get a woodstove connection and stock lots of candles.

**DO YOU HAVE THE** name of an old girlfriend still tattoed on your skin? If you want to remove her name, more than just touching a delete button is needed. It literally has to be burned off creating a smell like leaving a chicken too long in the oven.

And you had better not mind the expense either. It may have cost you $50.00 ten years ago to emblaze her name on your wherever, then done in less than an hour, but to get it erased from your body may set you back up to $3,000.00 and require 10 long and painful treatments. Never will your skin be totally babylike again. Pain, pain, double pain.

**WHAT REALLY PAINS** me is not a tattoo, but something that hasn't happened since the Depression: this fall US and Canadian consumers posted a negative savings rate for the first time in 65 years.

During the depression people dipped into their piggy banks to buy food, shelter, clothing. Now people spend what they don't have for cruises, sport vehicles and superbig TV sets. Suppose we get another severe economic downturn — a real possibility. How will people cope?

Sixty years ago, city people who had no food could by and large go back to relatives on the farm where there was no money, but always enough to feed an extra mouth. Today most farming communities are gone, and what is left is a far cry from the way my grandfathers operated with a dozen milk cows, a few pigs, a horse and chickens whose eggs were exchanged for groceries.

**WRITING ABOUT FARMS** reminds me of milk. The previous generation drank lots of milk and little soft drinks. Now young people drink little milk and lots of soft drinks. Soft drinks make soft bones. No bones about it, this will decrease bone density and cause lots of limb- and hip fractures in the future.

*Bert Hielema is always eager to start a new day while looking forward with intense fascination to the New Day. He lives in Rural Tweed, Ont.*

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*for all 26 issues in 1999

# Classifieds

## Classified Rates

**(Revised February 1, 1995)**

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| Births | $25.00 |
| Marriages & Engagements | $40.00 |
| Anniversaries | $45.00 |
| 2-column anniversaries | $90.00 |
| Obituaries | $45.00 |
| Notes of thanks | $35.00 |
| Birthdays | $40.00 |

All other one-column classified advertisements: $15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is $15.00. Letter under file number $35.00 extra. Photos: $25.00 additional charge.

**Note:** All rates shown above are GST inclusive

**ATTENTION!**

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.,

b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is *not* acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.

c) Photographs sent by fax *are not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.

d) *Christian Courier* will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.

e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. *Christian Courier* reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of $15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).

**NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS**

We offer a one-year subscription for only $25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the *Christian Courier* and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose $25.00 and the couple's correct address.

**Christian Courier**
**4-261 Martindale Rd.**
**St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1**
**Phone: (905) 682-8311**
**Fax: (905) 682-8313**

Our new e-mail address:
ccadpromo@aol.com

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## Thank You

**VAN EEK:**

Arie and Ellen Van Eek and their children thank all who filled their "retirement" evening with lots of laughs, fine humor, and good will. You lightened our time of transition. We also thank friends who expressed their love in person, in writing and in gifts. All of us are deeply thankful to God. He gave us Jesus to be our introduction and conclusion!

Rev. Arie G. and Ellen Van Eek

## Anniversaries

Sneek, Fr. Abbotsford, B.C.
1948 November 29 1998

We rejoice in the 50th anniversary of our parents and grandparents

**JOHN (JAN) and THERESA (TIETJE) BOERSMA**
**(nee WESTER)**

We are thankful to God, for keeping them in his loving care all these years and pray that he will continue to be with them.

Love from your family,
Art & Liz Boersma — Surrey, B.C.
Catherine, Chris, Elly
Jo-Ann & Gary Bomhof — Drayton, Ont.
Jer, Teresa, Alyssa, David
Jack & Bernita Boersma — New Westminster, B.C.
Heather, Johnathan, Matthew, Stephen
Home address: 35310 McCorkell Drive, R.R. #6, Abbotsford, BC V3G 2C3

Assen Abbotsford
the Neth. B.C.
1938 December 1 1998

It is with thankfulness to the Lord, that we, the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren announce the 60th wedding anniversary of

**ROBERT and HILDA BRONSEMA**

We wish you many more blessings, with love,
Andy & Ann Beerda
Clarence Bronsema
Jack & Judy Bronsema-Easy
Tony & Mary Ann Maan
(Frank Bronsema, †1985)
Stan & Faye Martin
Jack & Bernita Boersma
and 20 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.
Address: #325-32743 Marshall Rd., Abbotsford, BC V2S 1J8

## Anniversaries

Rijnsburg Stoney Creek
the Neth. Ont.
1948 November 25 1998

With praise and thanks to God, we announce the 50th wedding anniversary of

**ROELOF and ANGENIETA VELDMAN**
**(nee JUNGERIUS)**

Congratulations Mom and Dad, Opa and Oma!

Love from your children and grandchildren:
Fred & Henrietta Veldman — Stoney Creek
Nathan, Ben, Lukas, Adam
Bill & Wendy Veldman — Smithville, Ont.
Katelyn, Michael, Daniel
Joan & Harry Timmerman — St. George, Ont.
Jennifer & Randall, Stephanie, Ashley, Jaclyn

An open house for Mom and Dad will be held on Saturday, Nov. 28, 1998, from 3 - 5:30 p.m., in the fellowship hall, from Fruitland Chr. Ref. Church, Hwy. #8, Fruitland, Ont.
Home address: 10 Seaton Place, Stoney Creek, ON L8E 3E5

*Congratulations to Roelof and Angenieta Veldman on their 50th wedding anniversary!*

## Teachers

**DRAYTON, Ont.: Calvin Chr. School** is looking for a **teacher** to fill a maternity leave position. You will be teaching a **Grade 1 / 2** class of 21 students starting on the Monday following Spring Break and going to the end of June. If you have a Christian School Teacher Certificate and/or an Ontario Teacher Certificate and would like to join an energetic staff and if you love to teach young children, we would like to hear from you. Please send a letter of application and resume to:

**Calvin Chr. School**
**Box 141 High Street**
**Drayton, ON N0G 1P0**
**Att.: Willy Katerberg, Principal**
by December 10, 1998.

**RIMBEY, Alta.: Rimbey Chr. School**, located in Central Alberta, is accepting applications for a High School/Junior High position, starting February 1999.

Rimbey Chr. School is a vibrant, interdenominational school with 150 students, K-12. We are looking for a dynamic Christian individual for math, physics and phys ed subjects. Please send resumes to:

**Mr. Henry Vandermeer, Principal**
**Rimbey Chr. School**
**Box 90, Rimbey, AB T0C 2J0**
**Phone/Fax: (403) 843-3904**
**E-mail: richrsc@telusplanet.net**

## Teachers

**WOODBRIDGE, Ont.: Toronto District Chr. High School** requires an additional full-time teacher for second semester. Needed is a teacher for **Grade 9** courses (**science, English, geography**). Please send resume, credentials and statement of faith to:

**Ren Siebenga**
**c/o Toronto District Chr. High School**
**377 Woodbridge Avenue**
**Woodbridge, ON L4L 2S8**
**e-mail: rsiebeng@tdchristian.on.ca**

## Teachers

**RENFREW, Ont.: Renfrew & District Chr. School** has an opening for **full-time teacher for multi-primary class consisting of grades 1 - 4** (14 students). Position to start March 1999 to end of school year. Could lead to full-time for the following school year. Present teacher going on maternity leave. Please send resume and philosophy of Christian education to:

**Education Committee**
**P.O. Box 868**
**Renfrew, ON K7V 4H3**
**Attention: Joyce Hultink**

# Classifieds

## Anniversaries

Dedemsvaart Iroquois
the Neth. Ont.
1933 December 1 1998

"The Lord is good and his love endures forever. His faithfulness continues through all generations" (Ps. 100:5).

With joy and thankfulness to the Lord we announce the 65th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents

**MARTEN and KLARA VERBURG**
**(nee TIBBEN)**

We are grateful for the many years of blessing that they have experienced and pray for God's continued guidance and grace.

From all of us with love,

Joyce & Bert Bosman — Saskatoon, Sask.
Ann & Jerry Doppenberg — Yarrow, B.C.
Lena & Joe Vandenakerboom — Rocky Mountain House, Alta.
Nick & Jackie Verburg — Athens, Ont.
Harma & Len Verbruggen — St. Catharines, Ont.
Henry & Minny Verburg — Belleville, Ont.
Jenny Devries — Brampton, Ont.
Wilma & Ben Bronsema — Bowmanville, Ont.
Marten & Susan Verburg — Iroquois, Ont.

32 grandchildren and 48 great-grandchildren.

Open house on Saturday, Dec. 5, 1998, from 2 - 4 p.m., in the Dixon's Corners Community Chr. Ref. Church.

Best wishes only.

Home address: 17 Church Ave., P.O. Box 543, Iroquois, ON K0E 1K0

*Congratulations to Marten and Klara Verburg on their 65th wedding anniversary!*

## Teachers

**MAPLE RIDGE, B.C.: Haney-Pitt Meadows Chr. School** is now accepting resumes for a **full-time Grade 3 teaching position** starting on Jan. 4, 1999. Our school is located 40 min. East of Vancouver in the city of Maple Ridge.

Full resumes should be directed, by Dec. 4, to:

**Rod Berg**
**Haney-Pitt Meadows Chr. School**
**12140 - 203rd Street**
**Maple Ridge, BC V2X 4V5**

**ST. CATHARINES, Ont.: Beacon Chr. High School** invites applications for a **maternity leave position in the area of English and drama** beginning in mid-March of 1999. Applicants need to be qualified and need to demonstrate a love for God, a love for students, and a love for English. Please send resume and relevant information to:

**Ted Harris, Principal**
**Beacon Chr. High School**
**2 OMalley Drive**
**St. Catharines, ON L2N 6N7**
**Fax: (905) 937-1130**

## Obituaries

Jubbega Schurega Brampton
Fr., the Neth. Ont.
June 28, 1905 - Oct. 26, 1998

"*Mijn genade is u genoeg*"
(2 Cor.:12:9)
Psalm 73: 24-26

In the early hours of Monday, Oct. 26, 1998, the Lord took our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother out of her suffering to her eternal home at the age of 93.

**HELEN SIPKENS**
**(HIJLKJE VAN DER BIJ)**

Husband Jan Sipkens (†1977).
Dearly loved by her children:
Frances & Tony Brouwer — Cambridge, Ont.
Bill & Marie Sipkens — Sarnia, Ont.
John (†1987) & Gertie Sipkens — Wyoming, Ont.
Stan & Lenie Sipkens — Sarnia, Ont.
Geesje (†1998) & Clarence DeJong — Sarnia, Ont.
Agnes Sipkens — London, Ont.
Earl & Janet Sipkens — Sarnia, Ont.
Joan & John Huizenga — Sarnia, Ont.
Clara & Bill Barneveld — Sweaburg, Ont.

Loving grandmother of 35 grandchildren (3 are with the Lord) and 74 great-grandchildren.

Loved ones in the Netherlands: brother Uilke van der Bij, sisters Akke Veltkamp - van der Bij, and Clara v.d. Kaaden - van der Bij, nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held at the Second Chr. Ref. Church, Sarnia, Ont., where she had been a member for almost 40 years. Pastor Herman Praamsma from Brampton, Ont., led the service.

Correspondence address: Clara Barneveld, R.R. #1, Woodstock, ON N4S 7V6

## Obituaries

Birdaard, Fr. Oegstgeest, Z.H.
the Neth. the Neth.
Feb. 19, 1922 - Oct. 27, 1998

**ANNE K. WESTRA**

went to glory on Oct. 27, 1998.

Survivor of Vught-Dachau concentration camps from Oct. 27, 1943 to April 27, 1945.

Receiver of the Verzetskruis (Resistance-Cross), Ridder in the Orde van Oranje-Nassau, Kapitein der Rijkspolitie Schiphol Airport Security.

Sadly missed by his sisters and family.

Edith (Jetje)Vandenberg-Westra & Dirk Vandenberg — Sarnia, Ont.
Zu Vanderwoude-Westra & Geert Vanderwoude — Birdaard, the Neth.

Correspondence address:
Mr. Dirk Vandenberg, 523 Hollywood Place, Sarnia, ON N7V 2J1

## For Rent

**For rent: Boerderij** (farm), all conveniences, summer and winter, in **Friesland**, the Neth. Reasonable. For information phone:
**(519) 863-2096**

**For rent in Smithville**, Ont., **basement apartment**. $550 p.m., fridge, stove and utilities incl. No smoking, no pets. Good for 1 or 2 adults. For more info. call **(905) 957-2596.**

## Job Opportunities

Golden Fish and Chips, Hamilton, Ont. **Energetic, mature help wanted**. Must be able to work days and some evenings. Call **(905) 575-7141** (days) or **(905) 679-4386.**

**Social Service Work** — Become a part of our team of committed professionals providing loving care for needy children.

Mutual Support Systems, a parent model network of rural group foster homes in the Niagara Peninsula for children experiencing emotional and behavioral difficulties is searching for the following as part of its potential growth plan:

1) Families in the Niagara Peninsula that are interested in learning more about fostering children in their own home.

2) Group foster parents. This full-time position is suitable for a married couple and includes salaries, benefits, and housing for both candidates.

Please contact our Personnel Manager at:

**Mutual Support Systems**
**P.O. Box 397**
**Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0**
**(905) 892-4332**
**E-mail:**
**mutual@mutualsupport.net**
**Visit us at http://mutualsupport.net**

**PASTOR**

**Houston Chr. Ref. Church** in beautiful northwest British Columbia is seeking a **full-time pastor** to provide sound biblical preaching, ministry to youth and pastoral care. The church membership stands at 67 families; which translates into 169 professing members and 154 non-professing or baptized members. Please send a copy of your profile. A church profile is available upon request. For more information please contact:

**Rick Delau, Search Committee**
**Houston Chr. Ref. Church**
**Box 6, Houston, BC V0J 1Z0**
**Phone: (250) 845-7756**
**Fax: (250) 845-7578**

## Miscellaneous

**CLINTON, ONTARIO**
**ADULT LIFE LEASE RESIDENCES**

available 936 sq.ft. to 1235 sq.ft. Fully wheelchair accessible, sprinkler system, central air, security throughout building. Dutch and English spoken. For more info. call **(519) 233-7296 or (519) 482-7862.**

## Personal

**ONE TO ANOTHER**

Christian companion magazine.
Hundreds of readers Canada-wide.
Single issue $5.
Write to:
**#12 923 2nd Ave. S.**
**Lethbridge, AB T1J 0C7**

## House Exchange

Dutch family in Veenendaal, the Neth., looking for Canadian family — preferably in Brampton-area, Ont. — to participate in a **house exchange, June 24 - July 14, 1999.** Call Len Roos at **(905) 793-8213** during the day.

## Miscellaneous

**EH JJ SHOW**
Christian TV Entertainment

Times: Vision TV
Cable Network
Thursday mornings
6:30 a.m. ET & PT
7:30 a.m. MT & AT
Also CJIL-TV
(The Miracle Channel)
Lethbridge, Alberta
9:30 a.m. and a repeat in evening
Sponsored by Voortman Cookies
Web page: www.ehjjshow.com

## Miscellaneous

**ADA REALTY LTD.**
**2011-137 Ave., Suite 404**
**Edmonton, AB**
**T5A 4W2**
**(403) 473-8149**
*Sid Vandermeulen*
Contact us first when you think of moving to Edmonton and district.
***Het vertrouwde adres.***

**The Living Word**
**Sermons for reading services.**
CRC
Contact:
**R. Vander Ploeg Secr./Treas.**
**210 Clarke St. N.**
**Woodstock, ON N4S 7M7**
**Phone: (519) 539-2117**

# Classifieds

## Job Opportunities

CALVIN College

### Digital Resources Librarian

**The Hekman Library** (http://www.calvin.edu/library/) **of Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary** (Christian Reformed Church in North America) invites **nominations and applications for the position of Digital Resources Librarian**. The librarian leads the team responsible for designing, implementing, and maintaining a content-rich, well-organized digital library collection. The librarian plays a primary role in determining strategic and operational direction for the management, structure, and content of the digital library. Recognizing the needs of users and providing high-quality instruction are essential components of this position. The librarian also is a member of the Reference and Instruction Team responsible for reference service and instruction to the entire Calvin community and for liaison services to selected academic departments.

Minimum qualifications are a MLS; commitment to the Reformed (Calvinist) faith, experience in web design and page editors and other essential computer programs; experience in an academic library setting; demonstrated competency with microcomputer hardware and software and client/service technology; and experience in teaching and training.

Send a cover letter, resume, and names, addresses, and e-mail addresses of at least three references to **Connie Bellows, Director of Human Resources, Calvin College, 3201 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546. Deadline is Jan. 22, 1999.**

---

**Diaconal Ministries in Eastern Canada invites applications for a**

### Diaconal Outreach Ministry Developer

**Diaconal Ministries** has just adopted new goals which include a renewed focus on diaconal outreach in the community. We will work in partnership with other CRC agencies to help deacons & churches reach out in Jesus' name.

**The Diaconal Outreach Ministry Developer will:**

- Help diaconates and churches do needs assessments and start outreach ministry
- Help diaconates to start projects funded through Operation Manna
- Guide these projects to develop an effective word/deed ministry

This is a half time position to begin Feb. 1, 1999. Please submit your letter of application complete with a resume, by ***December 7, 1998***, to:
**Diaconal Ministries**
**350 Scott Street, #17**
**St. Catharines, ON L2N 6T4**
*For more information or a job description please contact: Ben Vandezande at (905) 646-4511: fax (905) 646-5183*

## Job Opportunities

### PRINCIPAL

**London Parental Christian School** is currently accepting applications for the position of Principal. Located in **London**, Ont., the London Parental Christian School is a K-8 school with an enrolment of 215 students and a teaching staff of 14 teachers. Applicants must be spiritually mature active Christians with administrative abilities and a strong commitment to Christian education. Candidates must demonstrate a strong vision for Christian education and strengths in the areas of visionary leadership, staff development and team building.
Please forward resume, a minimum of 4 references, a statement of faith and a statement of philosophy of Christian education to:
**Peter Van Geest, Principal Search Committee Chair**
**74 Breton Park Cres., London, ON N5W 1N1**
**(519) 455-9014**
**Application deadline is Dec. 21, 1998.**

---

Timothy Christian School (Toronto)
is seeking applications for the definite position of

### PRINCIPAL

beginning September 1, 1999

Our school of 196 ethnically diverse students (K-8) was established in 1958 and is situated in northwest Toronto. If you are interested in working with a dedicated staff of 13 and being supported by a committed Christian school community, we invite you to apply for this position. We look forward to assisting you in using your talents and gifts in our school to help prepare God's children for service in his kingdom. Please send your resume, a statement of faith, and your philosophy of education to:

**Principal Search Committee**
**Timothy Christian School**
**28 Elmhurst Drive**
**Rexdale, ON M9W 2J5**
**Enquiries may be made by phoning Mr. William Groot (416) 743-2554 or e-mailing Mr. Jeff de Walle at jdewalle@andec.on.ca**

---

**Calgary Christian School seeks an**

### Interim Elementary Principal

**for the 1999-2000 school year.**

- Calgary Chr. School (CCS) is a well-established, interdenominational Christian school with over 650 students in grades K-12.
- The Elementary Principal is required to direct and oversee the operations of the elementary building (K-Gr. 7) with a staff of 35 and 400 students.
- The Interim Principal must be able to articulate a sound vision of Christian education and be committed to working as a member of an administrative team.
- CCS seeks an Interim Principal with training and experience in Christian educational leadership and excellent communication and interpersonal skills.

The successful candidate must be qualified for an Alberta Teaching Certificate.
Application deadline is Nov. 30, 1998.
Please send resume, a statement of your vision of Christian Education and Leadership and references to:
**Mr. Jeff Adams, Chairperson of the Board**
**Calgary Christian School**
**2839 49 Street SW, Calgary, AB T3E 3X9**
**Phone: (403) 242-2896/Fax: (403) 242-6682**

## Miscellaneous

**Celebrating 23 years of service.**

The CCEF supports the cost of developing Christian textbooks for your local school.

Your financial support will help us in our publishing program. Your gifts are tax deductible.

**CANADIAN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOUNDATION INC.**

Fred R. Vander Velde
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# Classifieds

## Miscellaneous

## Calendar of Events

**Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.**

**Oct. 9-Dec. 9** CPJ's 35th Anniversary Celebrations - attend an evening of thankfulness and reflection. Call CPJ at (416) 979-2443 or 1-800-667-8046 for info. about your area's event. **Nov. 4: Winnipeg, MB; Nov. 5: Regina, SK; Nov. 6: Edmonton, AB; Nov. 7: Calgary, AB; Nov. 9: Smithers, BC; Nov. 10: Vancouver, BC; Nov. 11: Victoria, BC; Nov. 12: Abbotsford, BC; Dec. 4: Toronto, ON; Dec. 8: St. Catharines, ON; Dec. 9: London, ON.**

**Nov. 21** Giant Bazaar, 10 a.m. - 9 p.m., Calvin Chr. School, 300 Scott St., **St. Catharines**, Ont. Children's games, baked goods, crafts and plants. Lunch, tea, supper served. Auction at 7 p.m. Info.: (905) 937-6302.

**Nov. 24** Zingend Geloven, 2nd annual kerstzangdienst. Covenant CRC, 278 Parnell Rd., **St. Catharines**, Ont., at 7:30 p.m. Info.: (905) 646-6586.

**Nov. 26** "New Direction for Life Ministries - Toronto Annual Dessert Celebration and Fundraiser" from 7:30 - 9:45 p.m., with speaker Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, at Grace Toronto Church, 95 Trinity Street, **Toronto**. Call (416) 921-6557.

**Nov. 27** Ebenezer CRC, **Jarvis**, Ont. will be celebrating 50 years of service to our God at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Centre, **Port Dover**, Ont. All former and present members are invited to attend. Info.: (519) 587-5069.

**Nov. 28** Shalom Manor's Harvest luncheon, from 11 am-3 pm. Lunch will be served from 11 am - 1 pm. We will have flowers, crafts, gifts and the ever popular bake table. Donations to any of these tables are most appreciated. Be sure to keep this date open and mark it on your calendar. Sale will be held in the auditorium of Shalom Manor, **Grimsby**, Ont.

**Nov. 28** Organist Willem van Suijdam plays a recital at 7:30 p.m., Recital Hall, The Music Group, 5205 Harvester Rd., #2, **Burlington**, Ont. Free admission!

**Dec. 12** "Komt allen tezamen." Dutch kerstzang avond in the Immanuel CRC, Mohawk Rd. W. **Hamilton**, Ont., at 7:30 p.m.

**Dec. 18** Organ recital by Jonathan Oldengarm, 7:30 p.m., Central Presbyterian Church, **Hamilton**, Ont. Info.: (519) 338-3214.

**Just in time for Christmas!**

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*Komt allen tezamen*

Dutch "Kerstzang Avond" on
**Dec. 12, 1998, at 7:30 p.m.,**
in the Emmanuel Chr. Ref. Church, Mohawk Road W.,
**Hamilton**, Ont.

Meditation by Rev. Jacob Kuntz
With guests: "Double Dutch" with
Jerry Ruyf at the keyboard
Reading by Mary Ann Wunsche
Solo: Dick DeKleine
Organists: Fred Deys and John VanDerLaan
No tickets required, collection for "Zingend Geloven."

***Nederlandse Kerstzangdienst***

**Emmanuel Reformed Church**
**170 Clarke Street North**
**Woodstock, Ontario**
**Phone: (519) 537-6422**
**Nederlandse Kerstzangdienst met medewerking van het kerkkoor**
**Zondag, 7 December 1998, 7.30 n.m.**
**Verversingen na de dienst.**

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## Miscellaneous

*Call for student — Classis Chatham*

Any student from **Classis Chatham** who has applied to Calvin Seminary or its S.P.M.C. Program for the purpose of full-time ministry in the CRC and who is in need of financial assistance for the coming academic year is asked to request application forms from the Secretary, Suzanna Westerhof, 9772 Gold Creek Drive, Komoka, ON N0L 1R0. The **completed** application form must be in the hands of the Secretary no later than **Feb. 12, 1999**, *or the application will not be processed.* Also, **first-time applicants** should reserve the evening of **March 1, 1999**, for an interview with the Student Fund Committee.

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# Biblical principle of Jubilee launched in world capitals

**Fred Van Geest**

WASHINGTON/OTTAWA — In early October, the launch of the Jubilee 2000 Campaign on behalf of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) took place in Washington, D.C. The week before, a Jubilee 2000 launch took place in Ottawa, to coincide with the G-7 meeting held at that time.

Various church denominations and non-governmental organizations took part in both cities.

Why was everybody there? In short, to celebrate the biblical concept of jubilee and understand how this oft ignored biblical principle can be applied to economic relations among nations.

Christians are mobilizing and organizing Jubilee 2000 campaigns all over the world. While the Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee initiative is much broader in its attempt to apply the concept of jubilee to public policy, the main focus of the U.S. Jubilee campaign is on urging government debt cancellation for highly indebted, less developed countries which are experiencing great human suffering as a result of their inability to pay off overwhelming debts

JACK PANOZZO

*The launch of the Jubilee 2000 Campaign on Parliament Hill.*

## Overwhelming burden

The biblical concept of jubilee (Lev. 25, Deut. 15) is about restoring right relationships. It recognizes that there comes a time when it may be necessary to "reset" economic conditions to allow for people to continue to have access to the resources they need to carry out their calling in life.

Modern bankruptcy laws for individuals, businesses and some governments (such as Orange County in California) might be understood in this way.

The broad-based, ecumenical, Jubilee 2000 Campaign is applying this concept to highly indebted countries. In part through no fault of their own, a number of less developed countries have debt servicing payments so high that very little money is left over to spend on health, education and essential social services.

As a result, illiteracy and disease are rising, and many of these countries are falling deeper and deeper into poverty. It is hoped that a one time debt cancellation would "reset conditions" and would empower such countries to determine their own course of development to a greater degree.

The Jubilee 2000 Campaign is not just a matter of benevolence. In many cases, debt-ridden countries have paid the principal of their debt back several times over, but because of the way compound interest works, they are as deep as ever in debt. According to a November 2 story in the *Ottawa Citizen*, since 1981 the highly indebted poor countries have paid $2.9 trillion in interest and principal on loans that amounted to only $568 billion in 1980.

## Wealth from the south

It is also true that the less developed countries of the global south transfer more wealth to the developed northern countries in the form of interest payments than the north gives to the south in foreign aid.

The leaders, churches, non-governmental organizations and many individuals behind the Jubilee 2000 Campaign have drafted legislation proposals that will cancel debt and benefit the poor of the world who need it most. They hope to get 25 million signatures from all over the world on the largest petition ever, to send a message to political leaders that it is time to restore right relations.

*Note: for the campaign in Britain, see: http://www.oneworld.org/jubilee2000/index.html; for Canada: http://www.web.net/~jubilee/; for the* U.S.: http://www.j2000usa.org/.

# *Thank you, Arie and Ellen Van Eek*

**Reinder Klein**

On October 23, colleagues, friends and relatives of retiring Rev. Arie Van Eek gathered at Waterdown's Bethel CRC to celebrate Van Eek's 40 years of rich and varied ministry in the Christian Reformed Church. Highlights of the event ranged from the sublime to the hilarious, the singing of the Ambassadors male choir being counterpointed by the funny antics of Van Eeks's children and their families. Rev. Ralph Koops of Cambridge, Ont., served as MC and (ineffective) timekeeper for the evening.

Van Eek formally retired earlier this year on the same day he was ordained 40 years ago: September 24. He served four different congregations in Ontario, Alberta and Manitoba as pastor, and spent the last 20 years as executive secretary of the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada (CCRCC). It was in the latter capacity that Van Eek made his mark on the broader Canadian church scene.

REINDER KLEIN

*Arie and Ellen Van Eek and grandchild.*

Several guest speakers mentioned Van Eek's impact on the ecumenical assemblies in which he was the face and voice of the CRC. Janet Somerville, general secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches, testified to his stirring role in worship during meetings of the CCC, and to his exemplary passion for social justice. Dr Heather Johnson, retired director of ecumenical relations of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, lauded Van Eek's energy. Rev. Ian Morrison, director of ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, jokingly said that he thought Van Eek *was* the CRC in Canada; and Dr. John Johnson, retired pastor of Hamilton's McNab Presbyterian Church, referred to Van Eek's yeoman service as secretary for the Canadian Christian Festival #4.

From within the CRC, several persons praised Van Eek's many efforts. His leading role in getting the ministry with Canada's aboriginal people off the ground was noted, as were his efforts at stimulating the work of the CCRCC's other standing committees. Even his unique speaking style received mention, some of it honorable.

While speech and song were certainly appropriate to the occasion, humor was clearly not out of place on this night. In a skit by the younger set, Van Eek was delightfully spoofed as the preoccupied pastor who moves from one charge to the next without a care in the world, while his wife becomes increasingly harried as children keep coming and the bundles of luggage keep growing.

It was fun, yet it made clear that Van Eek's wife Ellen deserves much recognition and thanks for the often heroic manner in which she stood behind the work of her husband. Theirs was a team ministry, something Van Eek will undoubtedly keep in mind when he starts using the camera presented to him by Emma Winters on behalf of CCRCC's Interim Committee. It may not just be Van Eek who soon will be saying: "Say cheese, please!"

# News Digest

### Faith in space

SPACE (religiontoday.com) — John Glenn's return to space has reinvigorated his faith. The experiences of seeing Earth from the vantage point of 340 miles up "only strengthens my beliefs," he said during a news conference from the space capsule. The 77-year-old Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) elder said he prays every day and believes that "everybody should."

During the Nov. 1 news conference, Glenn said, "To look up out at this kind of creation and not believe in God is to me impossible."

John Glenn is not alone in finding renewed faith in the heavens. The crew of Apollo 8 read from Genesis while making the first flight around the moon. The first liquid poured and food eaten on the moon occurred when Buzz Aldrin took Communion, the *San Jose Mercury News* said.

### *An Appalachian trial*

MILLINOCKET, Maine (AP) — The first hiker to walk the Appalachian trail end-to-end has done it again, 50 years later and just before his 80th birthday. But Earl Shaffer is "mighty, mighty glad" to be done with the 3,440-km trek.

The hike took him five and a half months. He was often miserable, shivering in his sleeping bag after getting soaked by cold rain. He scrambled over rocky terrain day in, day out. He was inspired to write poetry on Mount Katahdin.

But Shaffer didn't hesitate when asked if he would try it again: "Ab-so-lute-ly not! If I had to go another week I would fall on my face."

### Short-term homeless

VANCOUVER (religiontoday.com) — Some Christians are "short-term homeless." When members of suburban and rural church groups come to Vancouver they are sent out on the street without money or food and told to look out for themselves. The culture shock is part of a program developed by Youth With A Mission staff, and is welcomed by pastors and youth leaders who want to give their members a taste of urban life. The visitors help in ministry to the homeless and in Vancouver's prostitution district.